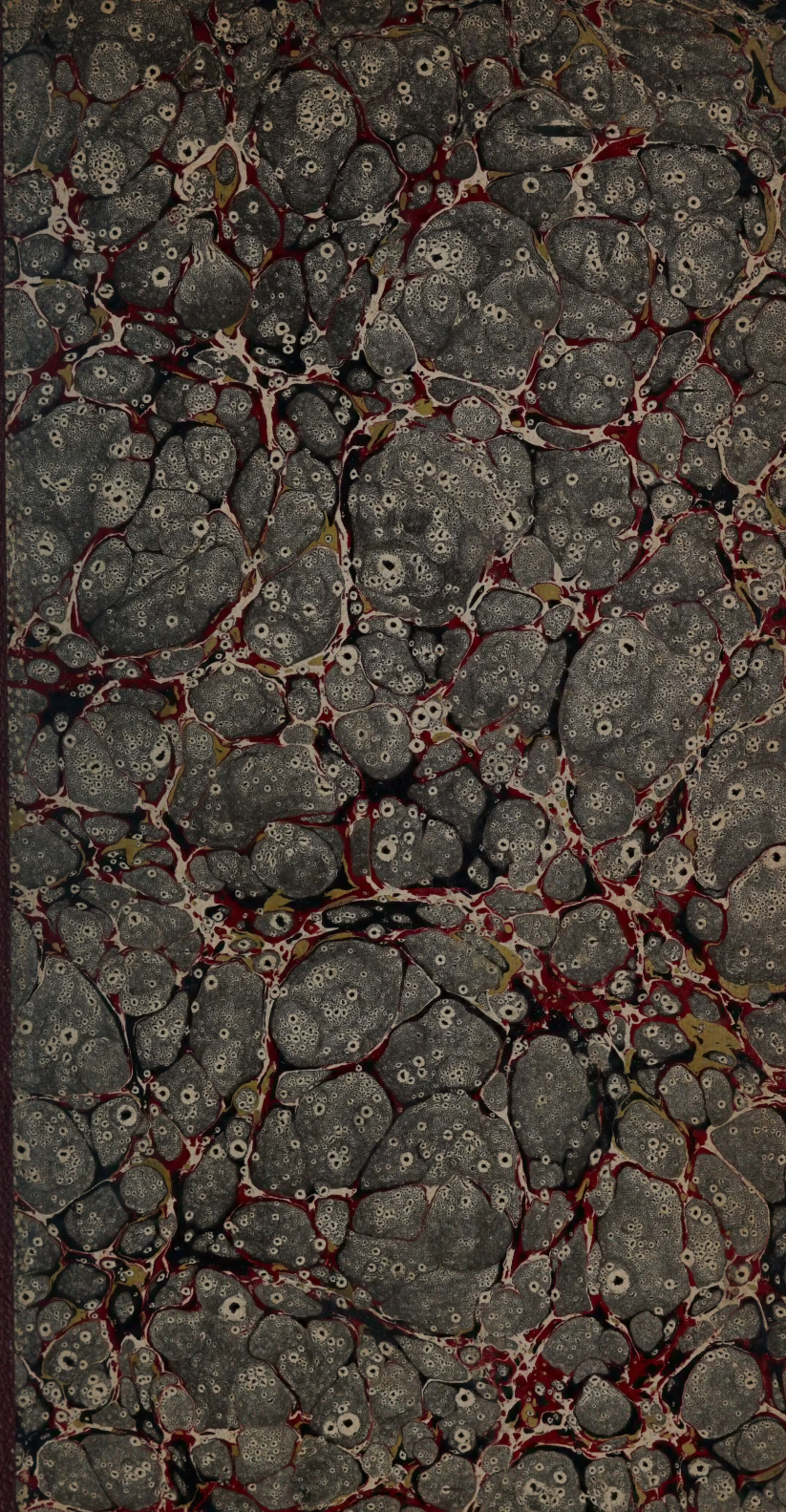

L. Mr. Genser,
With the Respect of
Geo. Thompson,
London.

# LONDON EMANCIPATION COMMITTEE'S TRACTS, No. 5.

---

# CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

---



1. LECTURE BY GEORGE THOMPSON, Esq.,
City Hall, Glasgow, 27th January.

2. LECTURE BY FREDERICK DOUGLASS, Esq.,
Queen's Rooms, Glasgow, 26th March.

3. LECTURE BY GEORGE THOMPSON, Esq.,
City Hall, Glasgow, 3rd April.

---

LONDON:
WILLIAM TWEEDIE, 337, STRAND.

1850.

Price One Shilling.

Family of
William Lloyd Garrison
July 8, 1899.

## LIST OF THE COMMITTEE.

---

MR. GEORGE THOMPSON, 8 Clayton Place, Kennington Road, S., *Chairman.*
MR. DENNIS M'DONNELL, 65 Pentonville Road, N., *Treasurer.*
MR. F. W. CHESSON, 34 Newington Crescent, S., *Hon. Secretary.*

---

ACE, REV. D., Clerkenwell.
BONNER, REV. W. H., Spring Cottage, Upper Bland Street, Dover Road, S.E.
BONNER, MRS., ditto.
CRAFT, MR. and MRS. WILLIAM, 12 Cambridge Road, Hammersmith, W.
CHESSON, MRS. F. W., 34 Newington Crescent, S.
DE PRADINE, THE BARON, 4 Norfolk Street, Park lane, W.
FARMER, MR. W., Clerkenwell News Office.
FORTEN, Mr., (late of Philadelphia,) Kentish Town.
ISBISTER, MR. A. K., M. A., 42 Queen's Square, W. C.
JONES, REV. T., Spencer Place, Blackheath, S. E.
JACOBS, MR., formerly of North Carolina.
LEWIN, MALCOLM, ESQ., 31 Gloucester Gardens, Hyde Park, W.
LESPINASSE, MONSIEUR, 35 Dorset Street, Dorset Square, N.W.
REID, MRS., 21 York Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W.
THOMPSON, MAJOR-GENERAL, Eliot Vale, Blackheath, S. E.
THORESBY, REV. T., 35 Mecklenburgh Square, W. C.
WILKS, MR. WASHINGTON, Dorset Street, Salisbury Square, E. C.
WHITTAKER, MR. T. M., Spencer Place, Blackheath, S. E.

# PREFACE.

The London Emancipation Committee, aware of the misconceptions which prevail throughout this country in reference to the Constitution of the United States, have deemed it right to sanction the publication of the lectures which will be found in the present number of their series of Anti-Slavery Tracts.

The Lectures of Mr. Thompson will present that view of the American Constitution which has been taken by every President, every Congress, and every political party in the United States from the period when the Constitution was adopted.

The Lecture of Mr. Douglass is an able and ingenious defence of the opinions professed by that gentleman and others whose theory is based upon the omission of the words "slave" and "slaves" from the Constitution, and who set aside, as destitute of all force, respect, and authority, the declared stipulations of the framers of that Act of Union, the statutes of Congress passed under its authority, and the uniform decisions of the courts of law.

The attentive reader of the following pages will be able for himself to decide between the disputants, and to determine without difficulty what the Constitution really *is*, and whether slavery can be abolished by Congress without a violation of the federal compact, and a virtual dissolution of the Union.

By order of the Committee,

F. W. CHESSON, *Secretary.*

34, Newington Crescent, Newington
Butts, London, S.

R. D. WEBB, PRINTER, DUBLIN.

# LECTURE

ON THE

# CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES,

## BY MR. THOMPSON.

Delivered in the City Hall, Glasgow, February 27th, 1860;
The Rev. George Jeffrey in the Chair.

---

SINCE the time when it was decided that I should deliver an anti-slavery address in this city, circumstances have occurred which have appeared to me to render it necessary that I should direct my own and your attention to one particular and vital branch of the momentous question of American slavery. You have recently had amongst you Mr. Frederick Douglass, of whose talents I would speak with the sincerest admiration, and to whose efforts for the enlightenment of the British public in reference to the true character of American slavery, the unspeakable wrong done to four millions of his countrymen in chains, and the timid, corrupt, and time-serving policy of the churches, I can cordially wish "God speed." Certain things, however, have been stated by that gentleman here and elsewhere, which I could not allow to pass unnoticed, without failing in my duty to the cause to which I have been so long attached, and without suffering injustice to be done to that body of abolitionists in America which I believe to be the only one acting out with perfect consistency and fidelity the principles of religion, morality, and sound policy as applied to the circumstances of the United States. In the *North British Mail* of the 15th inst. Mr. Douglass is reported to have said, in the course of a lecture in John-street church, that amongst the various anti-slavery parties in the United States,

> "There was the Garrisonian party, whose programme was a dissolution of the Union. From these he differed entirely, and would rather draw the cords of the Union more closely, and bring the powerful and positive influence of the Northern States to bear on the slavery in the Southern States. Besides, the very object which the Garrisonian party were aiming at as the means of abolishing the evil, the slaveholding people looked to as the only salvation of slavery, and he thought they were right. Slavery could be far better preserved in these States with the Union dissolved, than with the Union continued."

On the 8th of this month I delivered a lecture on slavery in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in which, after referring to the great Republican party of the United States, I said—Besides this political party, there is a non-political party, of which Mr. Garrison is the founder and the head. The adherents of this party cannot vote, for the reason that they cannot elect a man to an office which he cannot assume until he has taken an oath to support the constitution—which constitution guarantees the slaveholder his rights of property in human beings, and pledges the power of federal government to the defence of those rights. By this party the constitution is de-

nounced as an unholy and iniquitous compact, which must be dissolved as the first effectual step towards the overthrow of slavery. Hence they are avowedly disunion, and inscribe upon their flag,

"NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS:
NO COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY."

They do not obstruct political anti-slavery action, but they do not co-operate in it further than by the dissemination of their own high, uncompromising principles. In accordance with their settled views of what is right and necessary, they seek the separation of the free from the slave states. With this party it has been my privilege to co-operate for five and twenty years, and with ever-increasing admiration of their disinterestedness and fidelity. I still regard them as the only party in America who with consistency, singleness of purpose, and in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, are carrying on the work of immediate emancipation. Well, Mr. Douglass followed me in Newcastle, and was pleased to refer to the lecture I had delivered, and in doing so is reported in one paper to have said: "That so far from slavery being guaranteed in the American constituation, the system might be put an end to by honestly carrying out the provisions of the constitution." In another report of the same discourse, Mr. Douglass is represented as "arguing at considerable length that the constitution and laws of the United States could not, except by the grossest perversion, be construed into the protection of slavery." And at page 396 of Mr. Douglass's work, "My Bondage and My Freedom," I find the following passage:—

"The constitution of the United States not only contained no guarantees in favour of Slavery, but, on the contrary, it is, in its letter and spirit, an anti-slavery instrument, demanding the abolition of Slavery as a condition of its own existence as the supreme law of the land."

It is upon the several important points involved in these quotations that I am anxious to address you, and the discussion of them will bring out clearly the political aspects of slavery in the United States, which is, in fact, one of the topics announced for my present lecture. Let us see what these points are. Mr. Douglass affirms,

1. That slavery is not guaranteed by the constitution of the United States, and that it is only by the grossest perversion that the constitution and laws of the United States can be construed into the protection of slavery.

2. That the constitution contains provisions which, if honestly carried out, would put an end to slavery.

3. That the abolition of slavery should be sought through the preservation of the Union, and the powerful and positive influence of the Northern States acting through the Union upon the Slave States.

4. That the programme of the Garrisonian party, if carried out to the dissolution of the Union, would lead to the salvation of slavery.

On all these grave points I join issue with Mr. Douglass.

I will now ask you to accompany me with your closest and most

critical attention, while I follow Mr. Douglass through these several distinct propositions.

Mr. Douglass denies that the constitution of the United States, which is the origin and basis of the present Union, guarantees slavery. I affirm that it does. Judge you between us. The introduction of slavery into the provinces of America was part of the colonial policy of Great Britain. Long before, and at the era of Independence, it existed to some extent in each of the original thirteen States of the Union. At the time of the Revolution, the evils of the institution were by some of the States severely felt, and its incompatibility with an honest and consistent profession of the principles of a republican government was too palpable not to be generally perceived and acknowledged. It was considered, however, the dictate of sound policy, when the Congress was convoked that put forth the Declaration of Independence, to strike out that portion of the original draft of the instrument which reprobated in severe language the conduct of the mother country in relation to slavery and the slave trade. This was the first concession to slavery. There can be no manner of doubt on this point, as we have a perfect copy and *fac simile* of Mr. Jefferson's manuscript. Again, two years afterwards, when Articles of Confederation between the several states were adopted, the topic of slavery was carefully and advisedly excluded. In 1786, when the perils of the revolutionary conflict were over, and peace invited the exercise of patriotism, philanthropy, and religion in the formation of a more stable and more perfect system of government, by which were to be reconciled the jarring elements incident to a wide spread country, peopled by inhabitants whose geographical position, whose education, whose pursuits, whose interests, and whose religious creeds were different, the great struggle between principle and expediency—between acting out the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and compromising its self-evident truths—took place. I have referred to the Declaration of Independence, from which all reference to slavery was expunged. I have referred, also, to the Articles of Confederation, in which nothing relating to slavery was introduced. For eleven years, therefore, the subject of slavery remained in abeyance, and during that time the system had been abolished in several of the New England States. I must now ask you to remark the difference which appears between the constitution and its provisions, and the instrument just alluded to. The Declaration of Independence is silent on the subject of slavery; so also were the Articles of Confederation. While these instruments constituted the bond of union or federation, no State was pledged, or otherwise committed, to any other State on the subject of slavery. The inhabitants of the several States were responsible to themselves alone for the support of slavery, and were in no way called upon to render aid in its defence to any other commonwealth. Was the same caution observed with respect to the constitution? That is the question. Mr. Douglass makes two important assertions on this essential point; first, that the constitution contains no guarantees of slavery;

and next, that it does contain provisions for bringing it to an end. His words are : "provisions, which, if honestly carried out, would put an end to it." Mr. Douglass will, I hope, see and duly consider the refutation which I shall now offer to these assertions. My authorities on this subject shall be of the most unquestionable character. And, first, I will speak of the constitution itself.

Article 1, section 9, provides for the continuance of the African slave trade for twenty years after the adoption of the constitution.

Article 4, section 2, provides for the recovery from other States of fugitive slaves.

Article 1, section 2, gives the Slave States a representation of three-fifths of all the slave population ; and,

Article 1, section 8, requires the president to use the naval, military, ordnance, and militia resources of the entire country for the suppression of a slave insurrection, in the same manner as he would employ them to repel invasion.

You will very justly require to know whether I have rightly rendered the true meaning and intention of these clauses, and I am bound to prove that I have.

The African slave-trade was continued for twenty years after the ratification of the constitution, and was then abolished by the Congress, under the express power given by the constitution for that purpose.

Then, as to the meaning of the clause which I have said guarantees the recovery of fugitive slaves, you will be told that the word "slave" is not in the constitution, and that it reads, "persons or servants held to service or labour." You are perfectly aware that when an act of parliament is brought before our judges, that they may clear up anything that is uncertain or obscure, they invariably inquire what was the design of the legislature in framing the particular act, and administer it accordingly. You know, also, that judges in equity, when the wording of a will is in dispute, always seek to ascertain what was the meaning, what the wish, what the design of the testator was, and consider themselves bound to carry out the provisions of the will accordingly. Let us apply these rules to the clause now under consideration. Let us go back to 1787, and enter Independence Hall, Philadelphia, where sat in convention the illustrious men who framed the constitution, with George Washington in the chair. On the 28th of August, Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney, two delegates from the State of South Carolina, "moved that the constitution should require fugitive slaves and servants to be delivered up like criminals :" and after a discussion on the subject, the clause, as it stands in the constitution, was adopted. After this, in the conventions held in the several States to ratify the constitution, the same meaning was attached to the words. For example : Mr. Madison (afterwards President), when recommending the constitution to his constituents, told them that "this clause would secure to them their property in slaves ;" and that whereas at present "if any slave elopes to any of those States where slaves are free, he becomes emancipated by their laws, this clause was

expressly inserted to enable owners of slaves to reclaim them." I might quote many other passages of equally distinguished men to the same effect; but I will refer you to the language of one who spoke at a much later date—a most accomplished statesman, a distinguished diplomatist, a profound student of the constitution, and one who would have been but too glad to find in the constitution any support of his magnificent and heroic efforts in Congress in behalf of the slave and the rights of abolitionists. Listen to the words of the venerable John Quincy Adams, ex-President of the United States. "Yes," he says, "it cannot be denied—the slaveholding lords of the South prescribed, as a condition of their assent to the constitution, three special provisions to secure the perpetuity of their dominion over their slaves :—1, The immunity, for twenty years, of the African slave-trade ; 2, The stipulation to surrender fugitive slaves—an engagement positively prohibited by the laws of God from Sinai ; and, 3, The exaction of a representation for slaves —for articles of merchandise—under the name of persons." He goes on to say that "the preservation, propagation, and perpetuity of slavery is the vital and animating principle of the national government, and that a knot of slaveholders give the law and prescribe the policy of the country."

Such, then, is the constitution upon which the Union of the United States has rested for seventy-two years, and under which the government is at this moment administered, and must continue to be administered until the Union is dissolved, or the constitution, with the consent of the slaveholding States, is altered ; such is the constitution as interpreted and invariably acted upon by the Supreme Court, the highest judicial tribunal in the country; such is the constitution as understood by every Congress that has been convened since its formation; such is the constitution as held by every political party, save one, that has ever been formed ; such is the constitution as taught in every class-book, legal commentary, college, university, and law court in the Union ; such is the constitution according to the universal sentiment and acceptation of the people. Under this constitution the government of the United States has been a government of slaveholders from the beginning. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Tyler, Polk, and Taylor, all presidents, were slaveholders. At the time Mr. Adams spoke the words I have quoted, the President of the United States, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and five out of nine of the judges of the Supreme Court were slaveholders. Under this constitution thousands of slaves, having fled across the borders of the Southern States, have been captured in the Free States, dragged to merciless punishment, and doomed to a rapid death upon the plantations of the Mississippi. Under this constitution slavery and slave territory have extended until the six original slave states have become fifteen, and the slaves, half a million at the beginning of the revolution, have become four millions ; under this constitution the inhuman and infamous fugitive slave law was passed. Under this constitution the slave Burns was marched through the

streets of Boston, while the houses were draped with black, and the United States soldiers lined the way from the court-house to the wharf where lay the vessel engaged to carry the fugitive back to slavery. Under this constitution troops were sent from Washington to Harper's Ferry, to shoot down John Brown and his associates, and they were United States bayonets and sabres that pierced and hacked the body of the hero-martyr who was executed on the 2nd of December last. Yet this is the constitution that Mr. Douglass says contains no guarantees of slavery, and this is the Union the cords of which he says he would draw still closer.

Has Mr. Douglass considered in what relation he himself stands to this constitution at the very moment he is lauding and magnifying it, and what would be his fate if he returned to this country while yet the Union which he would strengthen continues intact? Did he not make his way to Canada to escape the clutches of the United States marshal? If he landed on the shores of the United States to-morrow, would he not be arrested on a warrant from the Committeee of the Senate, and carried before an inquisition at Washington? Has he not, in the discourse from which I have already quoted, told the people of Glasgow, that the Supreme Court of the United States has "declared that a coloured man of African descent cannot be a citizen of the United States, and that, no matter what outrages may be committed on him, he is denied the privilege of appealing to the courts of law?" Will Mr. Douglass, when he shall read what I this night say to you, still contend that the constitution contains no guarantee of slavery, and that those who say it does grossly pervert its meaning? Will he contradict the very words of those who framed the constitution, who explained the meaning of what they themselves did? Will he deny that even George Washington, the president of this convention, and the first president of the Union under the constitution, himself asserted his right to recover one of his own slaves who fled from Mount Vernon, and sought an asylum in New Hampshire? I will assume it possible he may do so—that he may scoff at the contents of the Madison papers, and sneer at the example of Washington, and deride such paltry authorities as Chancellor Kent, and Chief Justice Marshall, and Story—the very Blackstone of America—and the opinions of Daniel Webster, the great expounder of the constitution. I will therefore ask his attention, and yours while I do so, to the following beauties of his anti-slavery constitution, and the inscrutable blessings of the glorious Union—a description which cannot fail to impress his mind and yours with a sense of their value to the slave. Here is the best description of the United States constitution I have ever met with:—

"The whole system—the whole network of American society—is *one great falsehood.* Americans have become dishonest men from the very circumstances by which they have been surrounded. They went to the battle-field in defence of liberty. They formed a constitution—over the very gateway of which they inscribed, "to secure the blessings of *liberty* to ourselves and our posterity." In their declaration of independence they made the loudest and clearest assertions of the *rights of man.* At the very same time, the men who *drew up* the

declaration of independence—the men who *framed* the *American constitution*—the very men who *adopted* that constitution—were trafficking in the bodies and souls of their fellowmen. From the adoption of the constitution of the United States downwards, every thing good and great in the hearts of the American people,—every thing patriotic—has been summoned to defend *that great lie* before the world; they have been driven by their very patriotism to *defend this great falsehood.* How have they done it? They have done so by wrapping up slavery in honied words, and calling it the 'peculiar' institution; the 'social system;' the 'patriarchal institution;' the 'democratic institution.' They have spoken of it in every way but the right way. In their constitution *no less than three clauses* may be found of the most determined hostility to the liberty of the black in that country; yet clothed in such language that no Englishman could take offence at it. For instance; 'the president of the United States shall at all times, and in all cases, call out the army and navy to suppress domestic insurrections.' The Englishman in reading that clause in the constitution, would very readily assent to the justice of the proposition involved in it; he would agree at once in its perfect propriety. The army and navy! What are they good for, if not to suppress insurrections, and preserve the peace, tranquillity, and harmony of the State? But what does this language *really mean,* sir? what is its signification as shadowed forth practically in that constitution? what is the idea it conveys to the mind of the American? Why, that every man who casts a ball into the American ballot-box—every man who pledges himself to raise his hand in support of the American constitution—every individual who swears to support that instrument, at the *same time* swears that the slaves of that country shall either remain slaves or die! This clause of the constitution, in fact, converts every white American into an enemy to the black man in that land of professed liberty! Every bayonet, sword, musket, and cannon has its deadly aim at the bosom of the negro; and three millions of the coloured race are lying there under the heels of their seventeen millions of white fellow-creatures. There these seventeen millions stand, with all their education, religion, moral influence, and means of co-operation, sworn before God and the universe that the slave shall continue a slave or die!

"Take another clause of the constitution,—the one referring to the recovery of fugitive slaves. Upon the face of this clause there is nothing of injustice or inhumanity. It appears perfectly in accordance with justice, and in every respect humane; indeed, just what it should be, according to your English notion of things and general use of words. But what does it mean in the United States? I will tell you what it signifies *there*:—If any slave, in the silence of midnight, looks down upon himself, feeling his limbs, and thinking himself a man, and entitled to the rights of a man, shall steal away from his hovel,—snap the chain that bound him,—break the fetters that link him to slavery, and seek refuge from the 'free institutions' of democracy within the boundary of a monarchy—that slave, in all his windings by night and by day, in his way from the land of slavery to the abode of freedom, shall be liable to be hunted down like a felon, and dragged back to the hopeless bondage from which he had endeavoured to escape. This clause of the constitution is one of the most effective safeguards [guarantees] of that slave system of which we have met here to express our detestation; it makes the whole land one vast hunting ground for men; it gives to the slaveholder *the right* at any moment to set his well-trained blood-hounds upon the track of the poor fugitive; to hunt him down like a wild beast, and hurl him back to the jaws of slavery. It consecrates every rood of earth over which the star-spangled banner waves, as slave-hunting ground. Sir, there is no valley so deep, no mountain so high, no plain so expansive, no spot so sacred, throughout the length and breadth of America, as to enable a man, not having a skin like your own, to enjoy the free and unrestrained use of his own hands. Sir, in the Mosaic economy there is a command given, as it were amid the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai:—'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that hath escaped unto thee; he shall dwell with thee in the place that liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him.' America—religious America! has hurled defiance at Jehovah, and has said—'Thou shalt deliver him unto his master; thou shalt deliver unto the tyrant the trembling bondman that escapes into your midst.'

"Sir, this clause is one of the most deadly enactments against the natural rights of man; above and beyond all the *other* provisions of the constitution, it serves to keep up that system of fraud, wrong, and inhumanity which is now crushing three millions in their chains. How is it? Why, the slaveholders of the South would be wholly unable to hold their slaves, were it not for the protection afforded by the constitution; but for this the slaves would run away. What *is* the actual position of the Northern States? They stand around the slave system and support it. The physical power necessary to keep the slaves in their bondage lies north of Mason and Dixon's line. *The Southern States admit their inability to hold their slaves except through the protection afforded them by the Northern States.* The constitution makes it the duty of the Northern States to return the slave if he attempts to escape—to call out the army and navy to crush him into subjection. Every defender of the American Union—of the compromises of the constitution—no matter how much he may boast of his anti-slavery feeling, is, as far as his citizenship goes, a pledged enemy to the emancipation of the bondsman."

Such I believe to be a true, faithful, and unexaggerated picture of the character of the United States constitution.

You will naturally be anxious to know by whose hand this most admirable delineation of the practical operation of the United States government has been drawn. *The words are those of Frederick Douglass, as delivered on two occasions in my presence*—first, at a great meeting in Finsbury Chapel in London, presided over by the late Mr. Joseph Sturge, and then at a soiree given to Mr. Douglass before his departure for America in March, 1847.

What the constitution was in 1847 it is now—what the Union was in 1847 it is now. Since then we have seen the horrors attendant upon the Fugitive Slave Act—the virtual repeal of the Missouri compromise—the atrocities perpetrated in Kansas—the brutal assault in the Senate upon Sumner—the Dred Scott decision in the Supreme Court—the execution of John Brown and his associates; and we now behold the reign of terror throughout the Southern States—the enslavement of the free people of colour—the banishment of others by tens of thousands, attended by the most heart-rending circumstances of separation from all they hold dear and sacred—the expulsion of peaceful and pious white settlers, traders, teachers, travellers, and ministers—and the demoniacal lynchings in all parts of the country—together with scenes of blood-thirstiness and ferocity in Congress. And yet Mr. Douglass now tells the citizens of Glasgow and Newcastle that there are no guarantees of slavery in the constitution; and that if he could, he would draw closer the bonds of the Union. Such is the result of fourteen years' additional experience of the present government, and I have shown you what its fruits have been during that time. Mr. Douglass says there are provisions in the constitution which, if honestly carried out, would abolish slavery. What they are I know not; but I have shown you that the constitution, in all its relations to slavery, is its bulwark and defence; and that as long as it exists, he is a traitor to it who assails the institution it recognizes, guarantees, and upholds.

But we are told that the Union is necessary to enable the free States to act with directness and power upon the slave States. In what way? By enactment? That would be to violate and over-

throw the constitution, and to dissolve the Union at once. No man better than Mr. Douglass knows that the Congress has no constitutional power over the slave States in respect of slavery. Were an anti-slavery President to step into the chair on the 4th of March next, the oath he would have to take before he did so would be "to preserve, protect, and defend the constitution;" and that not according to his own interpretation, but as construed by the nine judges of the Supreme Court. Were all the representatives from the Free States anti-slavery men, each would be under the obligation of an oath to support the constitution of the United States. They could not, without adding perjury to treason, assail the rights of the Southern States in the matter of slavery within their own borders.

But is the Republican political party an abolition party? Does it even affect to be so? Not at all. Look at the mean, cowardly, and miserable disclaimers of these men during the recent ballottings for a speaker. Look at the language of their organs, even of the chief of them, the *New York Tribune.* Look at one of their illustrious leaders, Mr. Corwin of Ohio, a defender of the fugitive slave law. But, above all, look at the words of Mr. Sherman, the Republican candidate for the speaker's chair, who was supported by the entire body of the Republican representatives, and who spoke in their name. What did he say?

"This charge of interference with slavery in the States is unfounded. We do not wish or design to interfere with the relations existing between the races in the slave States. If I had my will, I would not have one single political abolitionist in the Northern States. I am opposed to any interference by the Northern people with slavery in the slave States. I act with the Republican party simply because the Republican party resists the extension, but does not seek the abolition of slavery."

And this is the emphatic deliverance of the nominee of that very party which pretends to be anti-slavery.

The other anti-slavery movements which have been referred to by Mr. Douglass, however excellent in their way, are, as he is well aware, insignificant and harmless in their effect upon slavery, and I pass them over to notice his repudiation of Mr. Garrison and the party of which he is the leader. First, however, let me say that to the labours of Mr. Garrison and his colleagues is owing the whole of that anti-slavery sentiment which, in its various forms, manifestations, and modes of action, now pervades the free States of America. I will borrow from Mr. Douglass, who differs from Mr. Garrison on the vital question of the Union, the words he used when speaking of that gentleman at a public meeting in London in 1847, over which I had the honour to preside. He said, addressing the chair:—

"Sir, the foremost, strongest, and mightiest among those who have completely identified themselves with the negroes in the United States, I will now name; and I do so because his name has been most unjustly coupled with odium in this country. I will name, if only as an expression of gratitude on my part, my beloved, esteemed, and almost venerated friend, William Lloyd Garrison. Sir, I have now been in this country for nineteen months; I have gone through it length and breadth; I have had sympathy here, and sympathy there; co-opera-

tion here, and co-operation there; in fact, I have scarcely met a man that has withheld fellowship from me as an abolitionist, standing unconnected with William Lloyd Garrison. Had I stood disconnected from that great and good man, then numerous and influential parties would have held out to me the right hand of fellowship—sanctioned my proceedings in England—backed me up with money and praise—and have given me a great reputation, so far as they were capable—and they were men of influence.

"And why, sir, is William Lloyd Garrison hated and despised by certain parties in this country? What has he done to deserve such treatment at their hands? He has done that which all great reformers and pioneers in the cause of freedom or religion have ever been called upon to do—made himself unpopular for life in the maintenance of great principles. He has thrown himself, as it were, over the ditch as a bridge; his own body, his personal reputation, his individual property, his wide and giant-headed intellect—*all* were sacrificed to form a bridge that others might pass over, and enjoy a rich reward from the labours that he had bestowed, and the seed which he had sown. He has made himself disreputable. How? By his uncompromising hostility to slavery; by his bold, scathing denunciation of tyranny; by his unwavering, inflexible adherence to principle; and by his frank, open, determined spirit of opposition to every thing like cant and hypocrisy. Such is the position in which he stands among the American people, and the same feeling exists in this country to a great extent. Because William Lloyd Garrison has upon both sides of the Atlantic fearlessly unmasked hypocrisy, and branded impiety in language in which impiety deserves to be characterized, he has hereby brought down upon himself the fierce execrations of a religious party in this land. But, sir, I do not like upon the present occasion even to allude to this subject, for the party who have acted in this manner is small and insignificant; so impotent for good, so well known for recklessness of statement, so proverbial for harshness of spirit, that I will not dwell any longer on their conduct."

This was a just and noble tribute, warm and gushing from a grateful heart through eloquent lips, and was greeted as it deserved with an enthusiastic response. When Mr. Douglass next repeats his eulogium of his "beloved, esteemed, and almost venerated friend," he will have to add fourteen additional years of devoted adherence to the same sublime career of self-consecration to the same principles—a career without variableness or shadow of turning; and he will have to point to the very different position of Mr. Garrison in his own country at the present time, where he now stands on a pedestal too high to be reached by the vile weapons that were so long successfully hurled against him.

Mr. Garrison is a disunionist. He was so at the time of the panegyric I have just read was pronounced. The essence of his disunionism is found in a resolution adopted at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, in May, 1844; in which secession from the United States government was urged as the duty of abolitionists:—

"That secession from the present United States government is the duty of every abolitionist; since no one can hold office or throw a vote for another to hold office under the United States constitution, without violating his anti-slavery principles, and rendering himself an abettor of the slaveholder in his sin."

In the light of the information I have laid before you, you will, I think, deem the logic of this resolution irresistible, and that it has been abundantly supported. Under this resolution Mr. Douglass laboured for some time as an agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and travelled with Mr. Garrison, who everywhere hoisted

the banner of "No union with slaveholders." I should rejoice in an opportunity of hearing Mr. Douglass give his reasons for saying that he now entirely differs from the disunion programme of the Garrisonian party. The late Dr. Channing plainly foresaw the dissolution of the Union as the consequence of the spread of sound anti-slavery principles, when he said—"On this subject (slavery) our fathers swerved from the right; we, their children, see the path of duty more clearly, and must walk in it. No blessing of the Union can be a compensation for taking part in the enslaving of our fellow-creatures, nor ought this bond to be perpetuated, if experience should demonstrate that it can only continue through our participation in wrong-doing. To this conviction the Free States are tending." Mr. Garrison and his party have long reached this conviction; and, obedient to their sense of duty, they are walking consistently in the path of disunion. For doing so, they have been branded as a no-government body. The American Anti-Slavery Society is not opposed to governments, but simply to the government of the United States, while it is based upon, and is acting for, slavery. Neither does it bind any man's conscience, for the only qualification for membership is, the "belief that slaveholding is a heinous crime." Those who look with unprejudiced eyes at the position occupied by the American Anti-Slavery Society, and upon the principle on which it is founded, cannot fail to recognize its high moral and religious features. Speaking for myself, I would say that, even did I differ from the Garrisonian party, I should honour them for their fidelity to their principles. They cannot vote for others to do that which they themselves would think it sinful to do. They cannot elect a man to an office which he can only assume on taking an oath to support the constitution—that very constitution which guarantees the rights of the slaveholder, hunts down the panting fugitive, and pledges the physical force of the government to the crushing of any attempt of the slaves to win their personal freedom. Looking at the constitution in precisely the same light as Mr. Douglass once viewed it, they boldly denounce it, as he once did, as an iniquitous compact—an unholy and most guilty compromise of all the sacred rights of a sixth part of the population; and, as he once plainly perceived, they look to the dissolution of the Union as the only effectual remedy, and as the only means of getting rid of the responsibility of participation in wrong-doing. For this all true men should honour them, and all true men who understand them do; for the rest, it is of little consequence either what they think or what they say. But, says Mr. Douglass, that would be the very way to perpetuate slavery. Whence has Mr. Douglass this new light? When did he make the marvellous discovery? Would slavery be more secure when all material support was withdrawn? Would fugitive slaves be less secure, when the Free States were hallowed ground on which no slave-hunter could dare to place his foot? Would Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, and North Carolina be long slaveholding States, if all northward and westward of their boundaries were free

soil? Would 300,000 slaveholders be long able to flog into submission four millions of their equal fellow-creatures? Would not the knell of the Union be the tocsin of revolt to the slaves in the South? Is it quite certain that multitudes in the South would not get rid of their possessions, and seek safety in free States, secure from the horrible apprehension of midnight insurrection? [Mr. Thompson continued for some time, describing the present aspects of the abolition movement in the United States.]

---

# LECTURE

BY

## MR. DOUGLASS IN REPLY TO MR. THOMPSON;

Delivered in the Queen's Rooms, Glasgow, March 26th, 1860.

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

I have witnessed with great pleasure the growing interest in the great question of slavery in this city, and in Scotland generally. Meetings with reference to that question have become more abundant of late than perhaps at any time since the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies. I read with deep interest the speeches made recently at a meeting called to sympathise with and to assist that faithful champion of the cause of my enslaved fellow-countrymen, Dr. Cheever. I have also read of another meeting in your city, having reference to the improvement and elevation of the people of Africa—having reference to the cultivation of cotton and the opening up of commerce between this and that land. All these movements are in the right direction. I accept them and hail them as signs of "the good time coming," when Ethiopia "shall stretch out her hands to God" in deed and in truth. There have been, also, other meetings in your city since it was my privilege last to address you. I have read with much care a speech recently delivered in the City Hall. It is published in one of your most respectable journals. The minuteness and general shading of that report convince me that the orator was his own reporter. At any rate, there is but little evidence or few marks of its having been tampered with by any than one exceedingly friendly to the sentiments it contains. On some accounts I read that speech with regret; on others with much satisfaction. I was certainly pleased with the evidence it afforded that the orator has largely recovered his long-lost health, and much of his wonted eloquence and fire; but my chief ground of satisfactisfaction is that its delivery—perhaps I ought to say its publication—for I would not have noticed the speech had it not been published in just such a journal as that in which it was published—furnishes an occasion for bringing before the friends of my enslaved people one phase of the great struggle going on between liberty and slavery in the United States which I deem important, and which I think,

before I get through, my audience will agree with me is a very important phase of that struggle. The *North British Mail* honored me with a few pointed remarks in dissent from certain views held by me on another occasion in this city ; but as it rendered my speech on that occasion very fairly to the public, I did not feel at all called upon to reply to its strictures. The case is different now. I am brought face to face with two powers. I stand before you under the fire of both platform and press. Not to speak, under the circumstances, would subject me and would subject my cause to misconstruction. You might be led to suppose that I had no reasons for the ground that I occupied here when I spoke in another place before you. Let me invite your attention, I may say your indulgent attention, to this very interesting phase of the question of slavery in the United States. My *assailant*, as he had a perfect right to do —that is, if he felt that that was the best possible service he could do to the cause of American slavery—under advertisement to deliver an "anti-slavery lecture"—a lecture on the present aspect of the anti-slavery movement in America—treated the citizens of Glasgow to an "*anti-Douglass*" *lecture.* He seemed to feel that *to discredit me was an important work*, and therefore he came up to that work with all his wonted power and eloquence, proving himself to be just as powerful and skilful a debater, *in all its arts, high and low*, as long practice, as constant experience could well fit a man to be. I award to the eloquent lecturer, as I am sure you do, all praise for his skill and ability, and fully acknowledge his many valuable services, in other days, to the anti-slavery cause both in England and America. We all remember how nobly he confronted the Borthwicks and the Breckenridges in other days, and vanquished them. These victories are safe; they are not to be forgotten. They belong to his past, and will render his name dear and glorious to aftercoming generations. He then enjoyed the confidence of many of the most illustrious philanthropists that Scotland has ever raised up. He had at his back, at those times, the Wardlaws, the Kings, the Heughs, and Robsons—men who are known the world over for their philanthropy, for their Christian benevolence. He was strong in those days, for he stood before the people of Scotland as the advocate of a great and glorious cause—he stood up for the dumb, for the down-trodden, for the outcasts of the earth, and *not for a mere party, not for the mere sect whose mischievous and outrageous opinions he now consents to advocate in your hearing.* When in Glasgow a few weeks ago, I embraced the occasion to make a broad statement concerning the various plans proposed for the abolition of slavery in the United States, but I very frankly stated with what I agreed and from what I differed ; but I did so, I trust, in a spirit of fair dealing, of candor, and *not in a miserable, man-worshipping, and mutual-admiration spirit*, which can do justice only to the party with which it may happen to go for the moment. One word further. No difference of opinion, no temporary alienations, no personal assaults shall ever lead me to forget that some who, in America, have often made me the subject of personal abuse, are at the same time, in their own

way, earnestly working for the abolition of slavery. They are men who thoroughly understand the principle, that they who are not for us are against us, but who unfortunately have failed to learn that they who are not against us are on our part. In regard to the speaker to whom I am referring, *and who by the way is, perhaps, the least vindictive of his party*, I shall say that I cannot praise his speech, for it is needlessly, or was needlessly personal, calling me by name over, I think, fifty times, and *dealing out blows upon me as if I had been savagely attacking him.* In *character and manliness* that speech was not only *deficient*, I think, but most *shamefully one-sided;* and while it was remarkably plausible, and well calculated to catch the popular ear, which could not well discriminate between what was fact and what was fiction in regard to the subject then discussed, I do not hesitate to pronounce that speech *false in statement, false in its assumptions, false in its inferences, false in its quotations even, and in its arguments, and false in all its leading conclusions.*

On very many accounts, he who stands before a British audience to denounce any thing peculiarly American in connection with slavery has a very marked and decided advantage. It is not hard to believe the very worst of any country where a system like slavery has existed for centuries. This feeling towards America, and towards every thing American, is very natural and very useful. I refer to it now not to condemn it, but to remind you that it is just possible that this feeling may be carried to too great a length. It may be that this feeling may be too active, and lead the people of Great Britain to accept as true some things concerning America which are utterly false, and to reject as false some other things which are entirely true. My assailant *largely took advantage* of this noble British feeling in denouncing the constitution and Union of America. He knew how deep and intense was your hatred of slavery. He knew the strength of that feeling, and the noble uses to which it might have been directed. I know it also, but I would despise myself if I could be guilty of taking advantage of such a sentiment, and making it the means of *propagating error, falsehood, and prejudice* against any institution or against any class of men in the United States. *I am willing that these words shall be regarded as marked words.* I have often felt how easy it would be, if one were so disposed, to make false representations of things as they are in America; to disparage whatever of good might exist there, or shall exist there, and to exaggerate whatever is bad in that country. I intend to show that this very thing was done by the speaker to whom I have referred; that *his speech was calculated to convey impressions and ideas totally, grossly, outrageously at variance with truth* concerning the constitution and Union of the American States. You will think this very strong language. I think so too; and it becomes me to look well to myself in using such language, for if I fail to make out my case, I am sure there are parties not a few who will see that fair play is done on the other side. But I have no fear at all of inability to justify what I have said; and if any friend of mine was led to doubt, from the confident manner in which I was assailed, I beg

that such doubt may now be put aside until, at least, I have been heard. *I will make good, I promise you, my entire characterisation of that speech.* Reading speeches is not my forte, and you will bear with me until I get my harness on. I have fully examined my ground, and while I own myself nothing in comparison with my assailant in point of ability, I have no manner of doubt as to the rectitude of the position I occupy on the question.

Now, what is that question? Much will be gained at the outset if you fully and clearly understand the real question under discussion—the question and difference between us. Indeed, nothing can be understood till this is understood. Things are often confounded and treated as the same for no better reason than that they seem alike or look alike, and this is done even when in their nature and character they are totally distinct, totally separate, and even opposed to each other. This jumbling up of things is a sort of dust-throwing which is often indulged in by *small men who argue for victory rather than for truth.* Thus, for instance, the American government and the American constitution are often spoken of in the speech to which I refer as being synonymous—as one and the same thing; whereas, in point of fact, they are entirely distinct from each other and totally different. In regard to the question of slavery, certainly they are different from each other; they are as distinct from each other as the compass is from the ship—as distinct from each other as the chart is from the course which a vessel may be sometimes steering. They are not one and the same thing. If the American government has been mean, sordid, mischievous, devilish, it is no proof whatever that the constitution of government has been the same. And yet, in the speech to which some of you listened, these sins of the government or administration of the government were charged directly upon the constitution and Union of the states.

What, then, is the question? I will state what it is *not.* It is not whether slavery existed in the United States at the time of the adoption of the constitution; it is not whether slaveholders took part in framing the constitution of the United States; it is not whether these slaveholders in their hearts intended to secure certain advantages for slavery in the constitution of the United States; it is not whether the American government has been wielded during seventy-two years on behalf of slavery; it is not whether a pro-slavery interpretation has been put upon the constitution in American courts—all these points may be true or they may be false, they may be accepted or they may be rejected, without at all affecting the question at issue between myself and the "City Hall."

The real question between the parties differing at this point in America may be fairly stated thus:—"Does the United States constitution guarantee to any class or description of people in that country the right to enslave or hold as property any other class or description of people in that country?"

The second question is:—"Is the dissolution of the Union between the Slave States and the Free States required by fidelity to the slaves or the just demands of conscience;?" Or, in other words, "Is the refusal to exercise the elective franchise or to hold office in

America, the surest, wisest, and best mode of acting for the abolition of slavery in that country?"

To these questions the Garrisonians in America answer, "Yes." They hold that the constitution is a slave-holding instrument, and will not cast a vote, or hold office under it, and *denounce all who do vote or hold office under it as pro-slavery men*, though they may be in their hearts and in their actions as far from being slaveholders as are the poles of the moral universe apart. I, on the other hand, deny that the constitution guarantees the right to hold property in men, and believe that the way, the true way, to abolish slavery in America is to vote such men into power as will exert their moral and political influence for the abolition of slavery. This is the issue plainly stated, and you shall judge between us.

Before we examine into the disposition, tendency, and character of the constitution of the United States, I think we had better ascertain what the constitution itself is. Before looking at what it means, let us see what it is. For here, too, there has been endless dust-throwing on the part of those opposed to office. What is the constitution? It is no vague, indefinite, floating, unsubstantial something, called, according to any man's fancy, now a weasel and now a whale. But it is something substantial. It is a plainly written document; not in Hebrew nor in Greek, but in English, beginning with a preamble, fitted out with articles, sections, provisions, and clauses, defining the rights, powers, and duties to be secured, claimed, and exercised under its authority. It is not even like the British constitution. It is not made up of enactments of parliament, decisions of courts, and the established usages of the government. The American constitution is a written instrument, full and complete in itself. No court, no congress, no legislature, no combination in the country can add one word to it, or take one word from it. It is a thing in itself; complete in itself; has a character of its own; and it is important that this should be kept in mind as I go on with the discussion. It is a great national enactment, done by the people, and can only be altered, amended, or changed in any way, shape, or form by the people who enacted it. I am careful to make this statement here; in America it would not be necessary. It would not be necessary here if my assailant had shown that he had as sincere and earnest a desire to set before you the simple truth, *as he has shown to vindicate his particular sect in America.*

Again, it should be borne in mind that the mere text of that constitution—the text and only the text, and not any commentaries or creeds written upon the text—is the constitution of the United States. It should also be borne in mind that the intentions of those who framed the constitution, be they good or bad, be they for slavery or against slavery, are to be respected so far, and so far only, as they have succeeded in getting these intentions expressed in the written instrument itself. This is also important. It would be the wildest of absurdities, and would lead to the most endless confusions and mischiefs, if, instead of looking to the written instrument itself for its meaning, it were attempted to make us go in search of what could be the secret motives and dishonest intentions

of some of the men who might have taken part in writing or adopting it. It was what they said that was adopted by the people; not what they were ashamed or afraid to say, or really omitted to say. It was not what they tried, nor what they concealed; it was what they wrote down, not what they kept back, that the people adopted. It was only what was declared upon its face that was adopted—not their secret understandings, if there were any such understandings.

Bear in mind, also, and the fact is an important one, that the framers of the constitution, the men who wrote the constitution, sat with closed doors in the city of Philadelphia while they wrote it. They sat with closed doors, and this was done purposely, that nothing but the result, the pure result of their labours should be seen, and that that result might stand alone and be judged of on its own merits, and adopted on its own merits, without any influence being exerted upon them by the debates.

It should also be borne in mind, and the fact is still more important, that the debates in the convention that framed the constitution of the United States, and by reasons of which a pro-slavery interpretation is now attempted to be forced upon that instrument, were not published until nearly thirty years after the constitution of the United States; so that the men who adopted the constitution could not be supposed to understand the secret underhand intentions that might have controlled the actions of the convention in making it. These debates were purposely kept out of view, in order that the people might not adopt the secret motives, the unexpressed intentions of anybody, but simply the text of the paper itself. These debates form no part of the original agreement, and, therefore, are entitled to no respect or consideration in discussing what is the character of the constitution of the United States. I repeat, the paper itself, and only the paper itself, with its own plainly written purposes, is the constitution of the United States, and it must stand or fall, flourish or fade, on its own individual and self-declared purpose and object.

Again, where would be the advantage of a written constitution, I pray you, if, after we have it written, instead of looking to its plain, common sense reading, we should go in search of its meaning to the secret intentions of the individuals who may have had something to do with writing the paper? What will the people of America, a hundred years hence, care about the intentions of the men who framed the constitution of the United States? These men were for a day—for a generation, but the constitution is for ages; and, a hundred years hence, the very names of the men who took part in framing that instrument will, perhaps, be blotted out or forgotten. Whatever we may owe to the framers of the constitution, we certainly owe this to ourselves, and to mankind, and to God, that we maintain the truth of our own language, and do not allow villany, not even the villany of slaveholding—which, as John Wesley says, is the sum of all villanies—to clothe itself in the garb of virtuous language, and get itself passed off as a virtuous thing, in consequence of that language. We owe it to ourselves to compel the devil to wear

his own garments; particularly in law we owe it to ourselves to compel wicked legislators, when they undertake a malignant purpose in innocent and benevolent language, we owe it to ourselves that we circumvent their wicked designs to this extent, that if they want to put it to a bad purpose, we will put it to a good purpose. Common sense, common justice, and sound rules of interpretation all drive us to the words of the law for the meaning of the law.

The practice of the American government is dwelt upon with much fervour as conclusive as to the slaveholding character of the American constitution. This is really the strong point, and the only strong point, made in the speech in the City Hall; but, good as this argument is, it is not conclusive. A wise man has said that few people are found better than their laws, but many have been found worse; and the American people are no exception to this rule. I think it will be found they are much worse than their laws, particularly their constitutional laws. It is just possible the people's practice may be diametrically opposed to their own acknowledged, their own acknowledged laws, and their all acknowledged principles. Our blessed Saviour when upon earth found the traditions of men taking the place of the law and the prophets. The Jews asked him why his disciples came with unwashed hands, and he brought them to their senses by telling them that they had made void the law by their traditions. Moses, on account of the hardness of the hearts of men, allowed the Jews to put away their wives; but it was not so at the beginning. The American people, likewise, have made void their law by their traditions; they have trampled upon their own constitution, stepped beyond the limits set for themselves, and, in their ever-abounding iniquity, established a constitution of action outside of the fundamental law of the land. While the one is good, the other is evil; while the one is for liberty, the other is in favour of slavery; the practice of the American government is one thing, and the character of the constitution of the government is quite another and different thing. After all, Mr. Chairman, the fact that my opponent thought it necessary to go outside of the constitution to prove it pro-slavery, whether that going out is to the practice of the government, or to the secret intentions of the writers of the paper itself, the fact that men do go out is very significant. It is an admission that the thing they look for is not to be found where only it ought to be found if found at all, and that is, in the written constitution itself. If it is not there, it is nothing to the purpose if it is found any where else; but I shall have more to say on this point hereafter. The very eloquent lecturer at the City Hall doubtless felt some embarrassment from the fact that he had literally to give the constitution a pro-slavery interpretation; because on its very face it conveys an entirely opposite meaning. He thus sums up what he calls the slaveholding provisions of the constitution, and I quote his words:—

"Article 1, section 9, provides for the continuance of the African slave-trade for twenty years after the adoption of the constitution.

"Article 4, section 2, provides for the recovery from other States of fugitive slaves.

"Article 1, section 2, gives the slave States a representation of three-fifths of all the slave population; and

"Article 1, section 8, requires the President to use the military, naval, ordnance, and militia resources of the entire country for the suppression of slave insurrections, in the same manner as he would employ them to repel invasion."

Now, Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen, any man reading this statement, or hearing it made with such a show of exactness, would unquestionably suppose that the speaker or writer had given the plain written text of the constitution itself. I can hardly believe that that gentleman intended to make any such impression on his audience, and yet what are we to make of it, this circumstantial statement of the provisions of the constitution? How can we regard it? *How can he be screened from the charge of having perpetrated a deliberate and point blank misrepresentation?* That *individual* has seen fit to place himself before the public as my opponent. Well, ladies and gentlemen, if he had placed himself before the country as an enemy, I could not have desired him—even an enemy—to have placed himself in a position so false, and to have committed himself to *statements so grossly at variance with the truth* as those statements I have just read from him. Why did he not read the constitution to you? Why did he read that which was not the constitution—for I contend he did read that which was not the constitution. *He pretended to be giving you chapter and verse,* section and clause, paragraph and provision, and yet he did not give you a single clause or single paragraph of that constitution. You can hardly believe it, but I will make good what I say, that, though reading to you article upon article, as you supposed while listening to him, *he did not read a word from the constitution of the United States; not one word.* (Applause.) You had better not applaud until you hear the other side and what are the real words of the constitution. Why did he not give you the plain words of the constitution? He can read; he had the constitution before him; he had there chapter and verse, the places where those things he alleged to be found in the constitution were to be found. Why did he not read them? *Oh, Sir, I fear that that gentleman knows too well why he did not.* I happen to know that there are no such words in the American constitution as "African slave-trade," no such words as "slave-representation," no such words as "fugitive slaves," no such words as "slave insurrections" anywhere to be found in that constitution. You can hardly think a man would stand up before an audience of people in Glasgow, and make a statement so circumstantial, with every mark of particularity, *to point out to be in the constitution what is not there.* You shall see a slight difference in my manner of treating that subject and that which my opponent has thought fit, for reasons satisfactory to himself, to pursue. *What he withheld, that I will spread before you; what he suppressed, I will bring to light; and what he passed over in silence, I will proclaim.*

Here then are the several provisions of the constitution to which reference has been made. I will read them word for word, just as they stand in the paper, in the constitution itself.

Article 1, section 2, declares that representations and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons.

Article 1, section 9.—The migration or importation of any such persons as any of the States now existing may think fit to admit shall not be prohibited to the Congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

Article 4.—No person held to service or labour in one State under the laws thereof escaping to another shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.

Article 1, section 8.—To provide for calling out the militia to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions.

Here then are the provisions of the constitution which the most extravagant defenders of slavery have ever claimed to guarantee the right of property in man. These are the provisions which have been pressed into the service of the human fleshmongers of America ; let us look at them just as they stand, one by one. You will notice there is not a word said there about "slave-trade ;" not a word said there about "slave insurrections ;" not a word there about "three-fifths representation of slaves ;" not a word there which any man outside of America, and who had not been accustomed to claim these particular provisions of the Constitution, would ever suspect had the remotest reference to slavery. *I deny utterly that these provisions of the constitution guarantee, or were intended to guarantee, in any shape or form, the right of property in man in the United States.* But let us grant, for the sake of argument, *that the first of these provisions, referring to the basis of representation and taxation, does refer to slaves.* We are not compelled to make this admission, for it might fairly apply, and indeed was intended to apply, to aliens and others, living in the United States, but who were not naturalised. But giving the provision the very worst construction—that it applies to slaves—what does it amount to ? I answer—and see you bear it in mind, for it shows the disposition of the constitution to slavery—I take the very worst aspect, and admit all that is claimed or that can be admitted consistently with truth ; and I answer that this very provision, supposing it refers to slaves, is in itself a downright disability imposed upon the slave system of America, *one which deprives the slaveholding States of at least two-fifths of their natural basis of representation.* A black man in a free State is worth just two-fifths more than a black man in a slave State, as a basis of political power under the constitution. Therefore, instead of encouraging slavery, the constitution encourages freedom, by *holding out to every slaveholding State the inducement of an increase of two-fifths of political power by becoming a free State.* So much for the three-fifths clause ; taking it at its worst, it still leans to freedom, not to slavery ; for be it remembered that the constitution no where forbids a black man to vote. No "white," no "black," no "slaves," no "slaveholder"—nowhere in the instrument are any of these words to be found.

I come to the next, that which it is said *guarantees the continuance of the African slave-trade* for twenty years. I will also take

that for just what my opponent alleges it to have been, although the constitution does not warrant any such conclusion. But, to be liberal, let us suppose it did, and what follows? Why, this—that this part of the constitution of the United States *expired by its own limitation no fewer than fifty-two years ago.* My opponent is just fifty-two years too late in seeking the dissolution of the Union on account of this clause, for it expired as far back as 1808. He might as well attempt to break down the British parliament and break down the British constitution, because, three hundred years ago, Queen Elizabeth granted to Sir John Hawkins the right to import Africans into the colonies in the West Indies. This ended some three hundred years ago; ours ended only fifty-two years ago, and I ask is the constitution of the United States to be condemned to everlasting infamy because of what was done fifty-two years ago? But there is still more to be said about this provision of the constitution. At the time the constitution was adopted, the slave trade was regarded as the jugular vein of slavery itself, and it was thought that slavery would die with the death of the slave trade. No less philanthropic, no less clear-sighted men than your own Wilberforce and Clarkson supposed that the abolition of the slave-trade would be the abolition of slavery. Their theory was—cut off the stream, and of course the pond or lake would dry up: cut off the stream flowing out from Africa, and the slave-trade in America and the colonies would perish. The fathers who framed the American constitution supposed that in making provision for the abolition of the African slave-trade they were making provision for the abolition of slavery itself, and they incorporated this clause in the constitution, not to perpetuate the traffic in human flesh, but to bring that unnatural traffic to an end. Outside of the Union the slave-trade could be carried on to an indefinite period; but the men who framed the constitution, and who proposed its adoption, *said to the slave States,*—If you would purchase the privileges of this Union, you must consent that the humanity of this nation shall lay its hand upon this traffic at least in twenty years after the adoption of the constitution. So much for the African slave-trade clause. Mark you, it does not say one word about the African slave-trade. Secondly, if it does, it expired by its own limitation more than fifty years ago. Thirdly, the constitution is anti-slavery, because it looked to the abolition of slavery rather than to its perpetuity. Fourthly, it showed that the intentions of the framers of the constitution were good, not bad. If [and Mr. Douglass here looked in the direction of Mr. Robert Smith, president of the Scottish Temperance League]—if you can't get a man to take the pledge that he will stop drinking liquor to-day, it is something if you will get him to promise to take it to-morrow; and if the men who made the American constitution did not bring the African slave-trade to an end instantly, it was something to succeed in bringing it to an end in twenty years.

I now go to the *slave insurrection clause,* though, in truth, there is no such clause in the constitution. But, suppose that this clause in the constitution refers to the abolition or rather the suppression of

slave insurrections; suppose we admit that congress has a right to call out the army and navy to quell insurrections, and to repel any efforts on the part of the slaves to gain their freedom—to put down violence of any sort, and slave violence in particular—what follows? I hold that the right to suppress an insurrection carries with it also the right to determine by what means the insurrection shall be suppressed; and, under an anti-slavery administration, were your humble servant in the presidential chair of the United States, which in all likelihood never will be the case, and were an insurrection to break out in the southern states among the slave inhabitants, *what would I do in the circumstances?* I would suppress the insurrection, and I should choose my own way of suppressing it; I should have the right, under the constitution, to my own manner of doing it. If I could make out, as I believe I could, that *slavery is itself an insurrection—that it is an insurrection by one party in the country against the just rights* of another part of the people in the country, a constant invitation to insurrection, a constant source of danger—as the executive officer of the United States it would be my duty *not only to put down the insurrection, but to put down the cause of the insurrection.* I would have no hesitation at all in supporting the constitution of the United States in consequence of its provisions. The constitution should be obeyed, should be rightly obeyed. We should say to the slaves, and we should say to their masters, "We see that a forced system of labour endangers the peace that we are sworn to protect, and we now put it away, and leave you to pay honest wages for honest work." In a word, with regard to putting down insurrection, I would just write a proclamation, and the proclamation would be based upon the old prophetic model of proclaiming liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof. *But there is one other provision, called the "Fugitive Slave Provision." It is called so by those who wish it to subserve the interests of slavery.* "Let us go back," says the *City Hall*, "to 1787, and enter Liberty Hall, Philadelphia, where sat in convention the illustrious men"—very illustrious! if they were the scamps and scoundrels he would make them out to be—"who framed the constitution—with George Washington in the chair. On the 27th of September, Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney, two delegates from the state of South Carolina, moved that the constitution should require fugitive slaves and servants to be delivered up like criminals, and after a discussion on the subject, the clause as it stands in the constitution was adopted. After this, in conventions held in the several States to ratify the constitution, the same meaning was attached to the words. For example, Mr. Madison, (afterwards President) in recommending the constitution to his constituents, told them that this clause would secure them their property in slaves." I must ask you to look well to the statement. Upon its face it would seem to be a full and fair disclosure of the real transaction it professes to describe; and yet *I declare unto you, knowing as I do the facts in the case, that I am utterly amazed, utterly amazed at the downright* UNTRUTH which that very simple, plain statement really conveys to you about that transaction. I dislike to use this very strong lan-

guage, but you shall see that the case is quite as strong as the language employed. Under these fair-seeming words now quoted, I say there is *downright untruth conveyed. The man who could make such a statement may have all the craftiness of a lawyer, but I think he will get but very little credit for the candour of a Christian.* What could more *completely destroy all confidence* than the making of such a statement as that? The case which he describes is entirely different from the real case as transacted at the time. Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney did indeed bring forward a proposition after the convention had framed the constitution, a proposition for the return of fugitive slaves to their masters precisely as criminals are returned. And what happened? Mr. Thompson —oh! I beg pardon for calling his name—tells you that after a debate it was withdrawn, and the proposition as it stands in the constitution was adopted. He does not tell you what was the nature of the debate. Not one word of it. No; it would not have suited his purpose to have done that. It would have been against his side of the question to have done that. I will tell you what was the purport of that debate. After debate and discussion the provision as it stands was adopted. The purport of the provisions as brought forward by Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney was this: "No person called to servitude in any State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service and labour, but shall be delivered up on claim, and passed to whom such service or labour may be due." Very well, what happened? The proposition was met by a storm of opposition in the convention; members rose up in all directions, saying that they had no more business to catch slaves for their masters than they had to catch horses for their owners—that they would not undertake any such thing, and the convention instructed a committee to alter that provision and the word *"servitude," so that it might apply* NOT *to slaves,* but to freemen—to persons bound to serve and labour, *and not to slaves.* And thus far it seems that Mr. Madison, who was quoted so triumphantly, tells us in these very Madison Papers that that word was struck out from the constitution, *because* it applied to *slaves* and not to freemen, and that the convention refused to have that word in the constitution, simply because they did not wish, and *would not have the idea that there could be property in men in that instrument.* These are Madison's own words, so that he can be quoted on both sides. But it may be asked, if the clause does not apply to slaves, to whom does it apply? It says—"No person serving and labouring escaping to another State shall be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up to whom such service or labour may be due." To whom does it apply if not to slaves? I answer that *it applied at the time of its adoption to a very numerous class of persons in America; and I have the authority of no less a person* than Daniel Webster that it was intended to apply to that class of men—a class of persons known in America as "Redemptioners." There was quite a number of them at that day, who had been taken to America precisely as coolies have been taken to the West Indies. They entered

into a contract to serve and labour so long for so much money, and the children born to them in that condition were also held as bound to "service and labour." It also applies to *indentured apprentices*, and to *persons* taking upon themselves an obligation to "serve and labour." The constitution says that the party shall be delivered up to whom such service and labour may be due. Why, sir, due! In the first place this very clause of that provision makes it utterly impossible that it can apply to slaves. There is nothing *due* from the slave to his master in the way of service or labour. He is unable to show a contract. The thing implies an arrangement, an understanding, by which, for an equivalent, I will do for you so much, if you will do for me, or have done for me, so much. The constitution says he will be delivered up to whom any service or labour shall be due. Due! A slave owes nothing to any master; he can owe nothing to any master. In the eye of the law he is a chattel personal, to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatever. Talk of a horse owing something to his master, or a sheep, or a wheel-barrow! Perfectly ridiculous! The idea that a slave can owe anything! I tell you what I would do if I were a judge; I could do it perfectly consistently with the character of the constitution. I have a proneness to liken myself to great people—to persons high in authority. But if I were a judge, and a slave was brought before me under this provision of the constitution, and the master should insist upon my sending him back to slavery, I should inquire how the slave was bound to serve and labour for him. I would point him to this same constitution, and tell him that I read in that constitution the great words of your own Magna Charta:—"No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without the process of law," and I ought to know by what contract, how this man contracted an obligation, or took upon himself to serve and labour for you. And if he could not show that, I should dismiss the case and restore the man to his liberty. And I would do quite right, according to the constitution. I admit nothing in favour of slavery when liberty is at stake; when I am called upon to argue on behalf of liberty I will range throughout the world, I am at perfect liberty by forms of law and by the rules of hermeneutics to range through the whole universe of God in proof of an innocent purpose, in proof of a good thing; but if you want to prove a bad thing, if you want to accomplish a bad and violent purpose, you must show it is so named in the bond. This is a sound legal rule. Shakspeare noticed it as an existing rule of law in his Merchant of Venice; "a pound of flesh, but not one drop of blood." The law was made for the protection of labour; not for the destruction of liberty; and it is to be presumed on the side of the oppressed. The speaker at the City Hall laid down some rules of legal interpretation. These rules send us to the history of the law for its meaning. I have no objection to this course in ordinary cases of doubt, but where human liberty and justice are at stake, the case falls under an entirely different class of rules. There must be something more than history, something more than tradition, to lead me to believe that law is intended to uphold and

maintain wrong. The Supreme Court of the United States lays down this rule, and it meets the case exactly: "Where rights are infringed; where the fundamental principles of the law are overthrown; where the general system of the law is departed from, the legislative intention must be expressed with irresistible clearness." The same court says that the language of the law must be construed strictly in favour of justice and liberty; and another rule says, where the law is ambiguous and susceptible of two meanings, the one making it accomplish an innocent purpose, and the other making it accomplish a wicked purpose, we must in every case adopt that meaning which makes it accomplish an innocent purpose. These are just the rules we like to have applied to us as individuals to begin with. We like to be assumed to be honest and upright in our purpose until we are proved to be otherwise, and the law is to be taken precisely in the same way. We are to assume it is fair, right, just, and true, till proved with irresistible power to be on the side of wrong. Now, sir, a case like this occurred in Rhode Island some time ago. The people there made a law that no negro should be allowed to walk out after nine o'clock at night without a lantern. They were afraid the negro might be mistaken for somebody. The negroes got lanterns and walked after nine at night, but they forgot to put candles in them. They were arrested and brought before a court of law. They had been found after nine at night, it had been proved against them that they were out with lanterns to be sure, but without a candle. "May it please your honour," it was argued for the prosecution, "of what value is a lantern without a candle? The plain intention of the law was that these people should not be out without a lantern and a candle." But the judge said this was a law against the natural rights of man, against natural liberty, and that this law should be construed strictly. These men had complied with the plain reading of the law, and they must be dismissed. The judge in that case did perfectly right. The legislature had to pass another law, that no negro should be out after nine without a lantern and a candle in it. The negroes got candles, but forgot to light them. They were arrested again, again tried, and with a similar result. There was then another law passed, that the negroes should not walk out after nine at night without lanterns, with candles in them, and the candles lighted. And if I had been a negro at that time in Rhode Island, I would have got a dark lantern and walked out. Laws to sustain a wrong of any kind must be expressed with irresistible clearness; for law, be it remembered, is not an arbitrary rule or arbitrary mandate, and it has a purpose, a character in itself, a purpose of its own. Blackstone defines it as "a rule of the supreme power of the state;" but he does not stop there—he adds, "commanding that which is right, and forbidding that which is wrong"—that is law. It would not be law if it commanded that which was wrong, and forbade that which was right in itself. It is necessary it should be on behalf of right. There is another law of legal interpretation, which is, that the law is to be understood in the light of the objects sought for by the law, or sought in the law

—that is, that the details of the law shall conform to the purpose declared to be sought to be attained by it. What are the objects sought for in the constitution of the American States? "We, the people of these United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America." The objects here set forth are six in number. "Union" is one, not slavery; union is named as one of the objects for which the constitution was framed, and it is one that is very excellent; it is quite incompatible with slavery. "Defence" is another; "welfare" is another; "tranquillity" is another; "justice" and "liberty" are the others. Slavery is not among them; the objects are union, defence, welfare, tranquillity, justice, and liberty. Now, if the two last—to say nothing of the defence—if the two last purposes declared were reduced to practice, slavery would go reeling to its grave as if smitten with a bolt from heaven. Let but the American people be true to their own constitution, true to the purposes set forth in that constitution, and we will have no need of a dissolution of the Union—we will have a dissolution of slavery all over that country.

But it has been said that negroes are not included in the benefits sought under this declaration of purposes. Whatever slaveholders may say, I think it comes with ill grace from abolitionists to say the negroes in America are not included in this declaration of purposes. The negroes are not included! Who says this? The constitution does not say they are not included, and how dare any other person, speaking for the constitution, say so? The constitution says "We the people;" the language is "we the people;" not we the white people, not we the citizens, not we the privileged class, not we the high, not we the low, not we of English extraction, not we of French or of Scotch extraction, but "we the people;" not we the horses, sheep, and swine, and wheelbarrows, but we the human inhabitants; and unless you deny that negroes are people, they are included within the purposes of this government. They were there, and if we the people are included, negroes are included; they have a right, in the name of the constitution of the United States, to demand their liberty. This, I undertake to say, is the conclusion of the whole matter—that *the constitutionality* of *slavery can be made out only by discrediting the plain, common sense reading of the constitution itself;* by discrediting and casting away as worthless the most beneficent rules of legal interpretation; by ruling the negro outside of these beneficent rules; by claiming every thing for slavery; by denying every thing for freedom; by assuming that the constitution does not mean what it says; and that it says what it does not mean; by disregarding the written constitution, and interpreting it in the light of a secret understanding. It is by this *mean, contemptible, under-hand way of working out the pro-slavery character of the constitution, that the thing is accomplished, and in no other way.* The first utterance of the instru-

ment itself is gloriously on the side of liberty, and diametrically opposed to the thing called slavery in the United States. The constitution declares that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; it secures to every man the right of trial by jury; it also declares that the writ of *habeas corpus* shall never be suppressed—that great and noble writ—that writ by which England was made free soil—that writ which set Somerset free in 1772—that writ which made that land in which I stand to-night, and where you stand, the land of liberty and the home of the oppressed of all nations—the land of which Curran said when he spoke of it, that he spoke "in the spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with, and inseparable from, British soil; which proclaims even to the stranger and sojourner, the moment he sets his foot upon British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the genius of universal emancipation." It was in consequence of this writ—a writ which forms a part of the constitution of the United States—that England herself is free from man-hunters to-day; for in 1772 slaves were hunted here in England just as they are in America, and the British constitution was supposed to favour the arrest, the imprisonment, and re-capture of fugitive slaves. But Lord Mansfield, in the case of Somerset, decided that no slave could breathe in England. We have the same writ, and let the people in Britain and the United States stand as true to liberty as the constitution is true to liberty, and we shall have no need of a dissolution of the Union.

But to all this it is said that the practice of the American people is against my view. I admit it. They have given the constitution a slaveholding interpretation. I admit it. And I go with him who goes furthest in denouncing these wrongs, these outrages on my people. But to be consistent with this logic, where does it lead? Because the practice of the American people has been wrong, shall we therefore denounce the constitution? The same logic would land *the man of the City Hall* precisely where the same logic has landed some of his friends in America—*in the dark, benighted regions* of *infidelity itself.* The constitution is pro-slavery, because men have interpreted it to be pro-slavery, and practice upon it as if it were pro-slavery. The very same thing, sir, might be said of the Bible itself; for in the United States men have interpreted the Bible against liberty. They have declared that Paul's epistle to *Philemon* is a full proof for the enactment of that hell-black Fugitive Slave Bill which has desolated my people for the last ten years in that country. They have declared that the Bible sanctions slavery. What do we do in such a case? What do you do when you are told by the slaveholders of America that the Bible sanctions slavery? Do you go and throw your Bible into the fire? Do you sing out, "No Union with the Bible!"? Do you declare that a thing is bad because it has been misused, abused, and made a bad use of? Do you throw it away on that account? No! You press it to your bosom all the more closely; you read it all the more diligently; and prove from its pages that it is on the side of liberty—and not on

the side of slavery. So let us do so with the constitution of the United States. But this logic would carry *the orator of the City Hall* a step or two further ; it would lead him to break down the British constitution. I believe he is not only a Protestant, but he is a Dissenter ; and if he is opposed to the *American constitution because certain evils exist therein, could he well oppose all the other constitutions?*

But I must beg pardon for detaining you so long—I must bring my remarks speedily to a close. Let me make a statement. It was said to you that the Southern States had increased from 5 up to 15. What is the fact with reference to this matter? Why, my friends, the slave States in America have increased just from 12 up to 15. But the other statement was not told you. It is this : the Free States have increased from 1 up to 18. That fact was not told. No ; I suppose *it was expected I would come back and tell you all the truth. It takes two men to tell the truth any way.*

*The dissolution of the Union,* remember, *that was clamoured for that night,* would not give the Northern states one single advantage over slavery that it does not now possess. Within the Union we have a firm basis of opposition to slavery. It is opposed to all the great objects of the constitution. The dissolution of the Union is not only an unwise but a cowardly proposition. Dissolve the Union! For what? Tear down the house in an instant because a few slates have been blown off the roof? There are 350,000 slaveholders in America, and 26 millions of free white people. Must these 26 millions of people break up their government, dissolve their Union, burn up their constitution—for what? to get rid of the responsibility of holding slaves? But can they get rid of responsibility by that? Alas no! The recreant husband may desert the family hearth, may leave his starving children, and you may place oceans, islands, and continents between him and his ; but the responsibility, the gnawing of a guilty conscience must follow him wherever he goes. If a man were on board of a pirate ship, and in company with others had robbed and plundered, his whole duty would not be performed simply by taking to the long boat and singing out, "No union with pirates!" His duty would be to restore the stolen property. The American people in the Northern States have helped to enslave the black people. Their duty will not have been done till they give them back their plundered rights. They cannot get rid of their responsibility by dissolving the Union ; they must put down the evil, abolish the wrong. *The abolition of slavery, not the dissolution of the Union, is the only way in which they can get rid of the responsibility.* "No union with slaveholding" is an excellent sentiment as showing hostility to slavery, but what is union with slavery? Is it living under the same sky, walking on the same earth, riding on the same railway, taking dinner on board of the same steamboat with the slaveholder? No : I can be in all these relations to the slaveholder, but yet heaven-high above him, as wide from him as the poles of the moral universe. "No union with slaveholding" is a much better phrase than that adopted by

*those who insist that they in America are the only friends of the slave who wish to destroy the Union.* Reference was made in the City Hall to my having held other views and different views from those I now entertain. An old speech of mine, delivered some fourteen years ago in London, was rendered with skill and effect. I don't know what it was brought up for. Perhaps it was brought forward to show that I am not infallible, not like his reverence—of Rome. If that was the object, I can relieve the friends of that gentleman entirely, by telling them that I never made any pretensions to infallibility. Although I cannot accuse myself of being remarkably unstable, I cannot pretend that I have never altered my opinion both in respect to men and things. Indeed I have been very much modified both in feeling and opinion within the last fourteen years, and he would be a queer man who could have lived fourteen years without having his opinions and feelings considerably modified by experience in that length of time. When I escaped from slavery, twenty-two years ago, the world was all new to me, and if I had been in a hogshead with the bung in, I could not have been much more ignorant of many things then I was then. I came out running. All I knew was that I had two elbows and a good appetite, and that I was a human being—a sort of nondescript creature, but still struggling for life. The first I met were the Garrisonian abolitionists of Massachusetts. They had their views, opinions, platform, and eloquence, and were earnestly labouring for the abolition of slavery. They were my friends, the friends of my people, and nothing was more natural than that I should receive as gospel all they told me. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man" —that is, after I went over to Great Britain and came back again— I undertook the herculean task, without a day's schooling, to edit and publish a paper—to unite myself to the literary profession. I could hardly spell two words correctly; still I thought I could "join" as we say, and when I had to write three or four columns a week, it became necessary to re-examine some of the *opinions I had formed in my baby days; and when I came to examine for myself my opinions were greatly modified, and I had the temerity to state to the parties from whom I received them my change of opinions; and from that day to this—whether in the east or the west, in or out of America, in Ireland, Scotland, or England—I have been pursued and persecuted by that class of persons on account of my change of opinions.* But I am quite well satisfied, very well satisfied with my position.

Now, what do I propose? what do you propose? what do we sensible folks propose?—for we are sensible. The slaveholders have ruled the American government for the last fifty years; let the anti-slavery party rule the nation for the next fifty years. And, by the way, that thing is on the verge of being accomplished. The slaveholders, above all things else, dread the rule of the anti-slavery party that are now coming into power. *To dissolve the Union would be to do just what the slaveholders would like to have done.* Slavery is essentially a dark system; all it wants is to be excluded and shut

out from the light. If it can only be boxed in where there is not a single breath to fall upon it, nor a single word to assail it, then it can grope in its own congenial darkness, oppressing human hearts and crushing human happiness. But it dreads the influence of truth; it dreads the influence of Congress. It knows full well that when the moral sentiment of the nation shall demand the abolition of slavery, there is nothing in the constitution of the United States to prevent that abolition. Well, now, what do we want? We want this:—whereas slavery has ruled the land, now must liberty; whereas pro-slavery men have sat in the Supreme Court of the United States, and given the constitution a pro-slavery interpretation against its plain reading, let us by our votes put men into that Supreme Court who will decide, and who will concede, that that constitution is not slavery. What do you do when you want reform or change? Do you break up your government? By no means. You say:—"Reform the government;" and that is just what the abolitionists who wish for liberty in the United States propose. They propose that the intelligence, the humanity, the Christian principle, the true manliness which they feel in their hearts, shall flow out from their hearts through their fingers into the ballot-box, and that into that ballot-box it shall go for such men as shall represent the Christian principle and Christian intelligence in the United States; and that congress shall crystallise those sentiments into law, and that law shall be in favour of freedom. And that is the way we hope to accomplish the abolition of slavery. Since these questions are put here, it is a bounden duty to listen to arguments of this sort; and I know that the intelligent men and women here will be glad to have this full *exposeé* of the whole question. I thank you very sincerely for the patient attention you have given me.

---

# MR. THOMPSON'S REJOINDER.

A Lecture delivered in the City Hall, Glasgow, April 3rd, 1860.

[In revising this lecture for the press, Mr. Thompson has somewhat extended the address, and inserted some additional authorities which he was prevented, by want of time, from adducing at the time of its delivery.]

When I last had the honour of addressing an audience in the City Hall of Glasgow, I delivered an address on the constitution and union of the United States of America. I explained my reasons for adopting that subject, by saying that certain things had been stated in this city and elsewhere, which I could not allow to pass unnoticed, without failing in my duty to the cause to which I had been so long attached, nor without suffering injustice to be done to the abolitionists of America. I had reason to believe that the gentleman to whom I then replied was not ignorant of my intention to take the course I did, as I had made known my purpose to a mutual friend, with whom he was at that time in daily communication, and had also addressed to him a letter, in which I proposed a friendly discussion of the points on which we differed. In my letter to Mr. Douglass I said,—

"I should be gratified by an opportunity of comparing opinions with you respecting the *modus operandi* of the great American movement for the overthrow of the accursed system of slavery. There is no room for doubt, however, that we should differ widely and irreconcilably; and as little room for hoping that either would convince or change the course of action of the other; yet the argument would be interesting, and the pleasure of meeting mutual.

"The vast majority of the people of this country are, unhappily, very ignorant on the subject of the intricacies of the slavery question in America; but you will do me the justice to allow, that I am one of the few who are well informed respecting every phase, political, religious and economical, of the subject. It has been my study for more than twenty-five years to sift, analyse, and arrange all the various materials that have been brought together in the course of 'the irrepressible conflict.' Even during my residence in India I was a studious reader of American contemporary history, and twelve months of slow recovery from bodily prostration have given me leisure to review the ground over which I had before travelled.

"Your own course I have followed with scrupulous care. I have diligently perused your public utterances, and have sought from other sources to learn your present sentiments on cardinal and fundamental points. I am sorry to see how widely we stand apart. You, now, call that good which I call evil; you, now, would preserve that which I would destroy—seeing it is soldered with the blood of the millions who have been sacrificed through the seventy years during which the Constitution of the United States has thrown its impenetrable shield over the man-stealer.

"In all your efforts to pourtray the unspeakable atrocities of slavery; to exhibit the bleeding woes of the slave; to rekindle the anti-slavery feeling of the people here; to rebuke those synagogues of Satan, the pro-slavery churches of the United States, and to summon the churches of Britain to the discharge of their duty towards their guilty trans-Atlantic co-religionists, you have my warmest sympathy, my earnest thanks, and my heart-felt 'God speed.'

"For the rest—regarding the points on which we stand 'wide as the poles asunder'—should you deem me a foeman worthy of your steel, I am prepared to meet you, and show cause why I do most firmly believe that you are in a false and untenable position, and that in your support of the Constitution of the United States, you are practically taking the most effectual course to rivet and perpetuate the fetters of four millons of your countrymen in bonds. Choose your time, place, and weapons, and I am 'ready, aye ready.'"

This, you must admit, was a fair and manly challenge to meet and debate the great question at issue between us, and had the encounter taken place, I should have been careful that on my part, at least, it should have been conducted with good temper, and a rigid observance of all the rules of honourable controversy. Had my proposal been accepted, I should not have delivered my address on the constitution on the 28th of February; but as it was declined, I felt it my duty to the cause of truth, and my sacred duty to the misrepresented abolitionists of America, whose views and position had been placed in a false and injurious light, not to delay a reply to certain statements which had been publicly made here and elsewhere, and had found their way into respectable and influential journals. I determined, however, to fulfil this duty without saying a word that could be justly considered disrespectful, offensive, or unkind; and you, who heard me on the last occasion, or have read the report of what I then said, can judge how far I kept my resolution. In prefacing my remarks, I thus referred to the gentleman on whose statements I was about to comment:—

"You have recently had amongst you Mr. Frederick Douglass, of whose talents I would speak with the sincerest admiration, and to whose efforts for the enlightenment of the British public in reference to the true character of American

slavery—the unspeakable wrong done to four millions of his countrymen in chains—and the timid, corrupt, and time serving policy of the churches, I can cordially wish 'God speed.'"

Such was the manner in which I introduced this gentleman's name, and in my after references to him never employed a disrespectful word, or, in speaking of him, used a single description save his own proper name.

I have now to notice the speech of Mr. Douglass in reply. He complains of my "needless personality," in the repetition of his name. I will not, as a matter of taste, defend myself. At the time, I deemed distinctness necessary, and employed the name merely to identify the speaker. Mr. Douglass deemed it right to adopt another course. I was once, and only once, referred to by name, and in the rest of the speech was spoken of as "the orator," "the lecturer," "the speaker," "my assailant," "my opponent," "the City Hall," "the man of the City Hall," "the person," "that individual," and "the man."

So much for personalities. But much graver charges were preferred against me than those of being a man, an individual, a lecturer, or even an orator. It was said that, under pretence of delivering a lecture on the aspects of American slavery, I had delivered "*an Anti-Douglass lecture;*" that in exhibiting my skill as a debater, I had practiced "*all the arts, high and low;*" that whereas I had "once stood up in this city for the dumb, the downtrodden and the outcast," I had recently spoken for a "*a mere party,*" a "*mere sect,*" whose "mischievous and outrageous opinions I had *consented to advocate;*" that I had spoken in "*a miserable, manworshipping, and mutual-admiration spirit;*" that I had only the merit of being "*the least vindictive of my party;*" that I "dealt out with blows as if I had been savagely attacked," and that my speech was not only *deficient in character and manliness, but most shamefully one-sided;* that my speech was "*false* in statement, *false* in its assumptions, *false* in its inferences, *false* in its quotations, *false* in its arguments, and *false* in its leading conclusions;" that I had made the anti-slavery feeling of this city "*the means of propagating error, falsehood, and prejudice;*" that my speech was "calculated to convey impressions and ideas *totally, grossly, extravagantly at variance with truth;*" that I "threw dust in the eyes of my audience," and "*argued for victory rather than for truth;*" that I had "*perpetrated point blank and downright untruths;*" that I sought to "*subserve the interests of slavery;*" finally, that I belonged to "*a party that had pursued and persecuted the speaker on account of his change of opinions in America, Scotland, Ireland, and England.*"

These are all imputations of a very grave character, but I shall notice them no further than as they apply to the address I gave in this hall a month ago; and in performing that necessary duty I shall scrupulously abstain from ascribing motives, from exchanging epithets, and from uttering any complaint of the speaker's departure from the dignity, sobriety, and courtesy of public controversy. The opinions I have ventured to express—the justice of which I have now to defend—were the opinions of Mr. Douglass himself but a

few years ago, and never were they more eloquently enunciated or more convincingly argued, than while he promulgated them throughout the length and breadth of this country. I utterly deny the existence in my mind of any, the slightest ill feeling towards Mr. Douglass on account of any change that has been wrought in his views; and I think I may defy the detection in my address of a single word indicative of an unkind or unfriendly sentiment. It was with his views as a public lecturer, and with those views only, when recorded in respectable public journals, that I dealt; and in my manner of dealing with them I am not aware that I transgressed any one of the rules by which honourable disputants should be governed. As for any vindictive feeling, there existed no cause for it before, and there is room only at present for feelings of pity and forgiveness.

Were I in any part of the United States, I might safely leave the speech I delivered here on the 28th of February last to the judgment of the universal people, assured that men of all political views and every political party would admit its accordance with the universally understood principles of the constitution, the acts of the federal legislature, and the decisions of the highest courts of judicature. The truth of my statements, assumptions, inferences, quotations, arguments and conclusions, would be affirmed by slaveholders and non-slaveholders, by pro-slavery democrats and anti-slavery republicans, as well as by the most extreme disunion abolitionists. And why? Because not one of these assumptions, inferences, arguments and conclusions, was my own, or was derived from any exclusive source; but was drawn from the universally admitted facts of history, the uniform decisions of congresses and courts, and from the principles avowed and the admissions made by every political party that has ever aspired to the control of national affairs in America. I am not, however, in America, but in Great Britain; and what would be an act of supererogation there becomes an act of necessity here, both in vindication of my own truthfulness, and for the sake of those who might not be able of themselves to furnish an antidote to the errors which, in a specious guise, are attempted to be propagated amongst them.

I am not here to-night to indulge in any ingenious speculations on what the constitution might have been; or what it ought to have been; or what it might be made to be; but to demonstrate what it *was*, what it *is*, and what it has *done*. My *forte* does not lie in special pleading; in making the worse appear the better reason; in dexterous renderings and readings; or in amusing my hearers with an ingenious play upon words. I have to deal with a document whose very secret history has been laid bare; which has been seventy years before the world, not a year during that period having elapsed without its meaning and provisions being inquired into and discussed by the most profoundly learned men of every political opinion,—all whose decisions have been to the same effect. It is enough for me, (who have only truth for my object), that I know *who* the founders and the framers of the constitution were; that I know precisely what they *meant* in what they did; and that they, at least,

were honest; that I know with distinctness and certainty what was stipulated on the one side, and what was yielded on the other, at the time when the bargain was struck; that I know what construction the people put upon the constitution when they ratified it, and that they were not deceived; that I know what laws have been created under it; what states have been admitted by it; what every President has avowed respecting it; what the tribunals have recorded, and what has been the uniform judgment of the people, throughout the states, from 1788 to the present time. Knowing all this, is it for me to set aside all history and all law—all facts and all opinion—whatever constitutes evidence and authority—whatever is worthy of the name of truth or reason—to adopt a new-born notion, a fanciful theory, a baseless and extravagant interpretation? If I err in my judgment, it is not with Mr. Garrison that I err; no, I err, if at all, in entire unity with the venerable framers of the constitution; with every statesman that has administered it; with every judge that has ruled upon it; with the entire bench and bar of the United States; with every member of Congress of all parties; and with nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of all the people of the United States. This is "the class of persons represented by the speech" which I delivered in this Hall, and I think you will allow it includes a tolerably respectable and influential proportion of the enlightened citizens of the great Western Republic.

And now for the speech delivered in the Queen's rooms, which I trust will have this result, if no other, that it will dispose those who listen to me to give the closest attention to the statements I shall deem it right and necessary to offer in reply.

Let me begin at the beginning. I said that the first manifestation of slaveholding ascendancy was when the Declaration of Independence, drawn up by Thomas Jefferson, was expurgated of the passage relating to slavery and the slave trade. Mr. Jefferson, in his original draft, amongst the reasons urged in justification of the separation about to be proclaimed, had alleged that the King had, by his sanction of the slave trade, and his refusal to prohibit it, "waged a cruel war against human nature, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty, in the persons of a distant and unoffending people, whom he had sent to slavery in another hemisphere, there to incur a miserable death; and that this piratical warfare, which was the opprobrium of infidel nations, had been persisted in by the Christian King of England." This clause, the effect of which upon future proceedings was clearly perceived, the slaveholders in the Revolutionary Congress had influence enough to get expunged, and it is only preserved in the original manuscript. I said further, that when, in 1777, the articles of confederation were adopted, the topic of slavery was carefully and advisedly excluded. The fourth article expressly says that "the confederacy is to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse among the FREE inhabitants of the States; paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice excepted." It this particular, therefore, I was historically correct.

We come now to the constitution framed in 1787. Serious ob-

jection has been taken by Mr. Douglass to my having gone to the Madison Papers, for the purpose of demonstrating the origin and precise meaning of certain clauses which were inserted in the constitution. If it be the real object of an inquirer to ascertain the truth, I do not see that he can take a better course than the one I adopted. Mr. James Madison was one of the most illustrious fathers of the revolution, and sat in the convention which framed the constitution. In the year 1788, he was associated with two equally great men, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, in the publication of the famous essays called *The Federalist*, a series of masterly papers sent forth to expound and recommend the constitution which had been submitted to the people for their adoption. Mr. Madison afterwards filled the presidential chair for eight years. To what higher source, therefore, could I go for information respecting the real intentions of the framers of the constitution, than to the minutes made by Mr. Madison at the time, which were subsequently published under the title of "The Madison Papers"? You are told by Mr. Douglass that the papers of Mr. Madison were not made public until a quarter of a century after the constitution had been established, and are worthless as settling the meaning of that instrument. Were I disposed to agree to this mode of treating these papers, which shed so much valuable light upon the motives and designs of the men who sat in the convention of 1787, I should not be content to lose the advantage of the important fact connected with their appearance, namely, that the universal people had, before they were given to the world, placed upon the provisions we are now debating, an interpretation precisely in accordance with what the Madison Papers prove to have been the meaning and intention of the framers of the constitution. This entire harmony between the views of the people, twenty-five years after the constitution came into operation, and the revealed objects of the men who drew up the constitution, might suffice of itself to lay all doubts on the subject at rest for ever.

The first objection to my address on the constitution, requiring special notice, is that taken to the manner in which I referred to the pro-slavery clauses of the constitution. I will here quote the words of Mr. Douglass. I would observe, however, before doing so, that I hold in my hands a verbatim report of the speech delivered in the Queen's Rooms, in this city—prepared by gentlemen connected with your local press, who are ready to produce their shorthand notes, and to depose on oath, if required, to the accuracy of the copy which I now use. My quotations to-night will all be from this report, which will be open to the inspection of any one who may desire to look it over. The following are the words of Mr. Douglass :—

"The very eloquent lecturer at the City Hall doubtless felt some embarrassment from the fact, that he had literally to give the constitution a pro-slavery interpretation ; because on its face it conveys an entirely opposite meaning. He thus sums up *what he calls* the slaveholding provisions of the constitution, and I quote his words.

"Article 1, section 9, provides for the continuance of the African slave trade for twenty years after the adoption of the constitution.

"Article 4, section 9, provides for the recovery from other states of fugitive slaves.

"Article 1, section 2, gives the slave States a representation of three-fifths of all the slave population; and

"Article 1, section 8, requires the President to use the military, naval, ordnance, and militia resources of the entire country, for the suppression of slave insurrections, in the same manner as he would employ them to repel invasion."

This, I at once admit, is a perfectly fair quotation from my speech. Mr. Douglass thus comments upon it:—

"Now, Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen, any man reading this statement, or hearing it made with such a show of exactness, would unquestionably suppose that the speaker or writer had given the plain written text of the constitution itself. I can hardly believe that that gentleman intended to make any such impression on the audience; and yet what are we to make of this circumstantial statement of the provisions of the constitution? How can we regard it? How can he (Mr. Thompson) be screened from the charge of having perpetrated A DELIBERATE AND POINT-BLANK MISREPRESENTATION? That individual has seen fit to place himself before the public as one of my opponents. Well, ladies and gentlemen, if he had placed himself before the country as my enemy, I could not have desired him (even as an enemy) to have placed himself in A POSITION SO FALSE, as to have committed himself to statements SO GROSSLY AT VARIANCE WITH THE TRUTH, as those statements I have just read from him. Why did he not read the constitution to you? Why did he read that which was NOT the constitution? He pretended to be giving you chapter and verse, section and clause, and yet HE DID NOT GIVE YOU A SINGLE WORD OF THE CONSTITUTION! You can hardly believe it, but I WILL MAKE GOOD WHAT I SAY, that, though reading as you supposed, article by article, HE DID NOT READ A WORD from the CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, NOT ONE WORD! Why did he not? *O, Sir, I fear that the gentleman knows too well why he did not.* * * * What he *withheld*, that I will spread before you; what he *suppressed*, I will bring to light."

I doubt if the annals of our law courts could furnish an instance of a more laboured attempt to blacken the character of a witness, than this effort of Mr. Douglass to exhibit me to his audience as a person capable of imposing upon those whom I addressed deliberate falsehoods in the place of truth. In the passage quoted from my speech, I gave what I honestly believed to be the purport and real signification of the several clauses in the constitution to which I referred, and have only here to repeat what I then said, to present the most triumphant refutation to the long black catalogue of charges brought against me. The words following my summary of the pro-slavery clauses were these:—

"You will very justly require to know whether I have rightly rendered the true meaning and intention of these clauses, and I am bound to prove that I have.

The African slave trade *was* continued for twenty years after the ratification of the constitution, and was then abolished by the Congress under the express power given by the constitution for that purpose.

Then, as to the meaning of the clause which I have said guarantees the recovery of fugitive slaves, you will be told that the word "slave" is not in the constitution, and that it reads, "persons or servants held to service or labour." You are perfectly aware that when an Act of Parliament is brought before our judges, that they may clear up anything that is uncertain or obscure, they invariably inquire what was the design of the Legislature in framing the particular Act, and administer it accordingly. You know, also, that judges in equity, when the wording of a will is in dispute, always seek to ascertain what was the meaning, what the wish, what the design of the testator was, and consider them-

selves bound to carry out the provisions of the will accordingly. Let us apply these rules to the clause now under consideration."

I then referred to the introduction into the convention of a proposition to insert a clause for the recovery of fugitive slaves, and gave what I shall presently demonstrate was a true account of that transaction. Quoting the words of Mr. Madison, when explaining to his constituents the design of what is called the fugitive slave clauses, I then said :—

"I might quote many other passages from the speeches of equally distinguished men to the same effect ; but I will refer you to the language of one who spoke at a much later date—a most accomplished statesman, a distinguished diplomatist, a profound student of the constitution, and one who would have been but too glad to find in the constitution any support of his magnificent and heroic efforts in Congress in behalf of the slave and the rights of abolitionists. Listen to the words of the venerable John Quincy Adams, ex-President of the United States :—'Yes,' he says, 'it cannot be denied—the slaveholding lords of the South prescribed, as a condition of their assent to the constitution, three special provisions to secure the perpetuity of their dominion over their slaves :—1, The immunity for twenty years of the African slave trade ; 2, The stipulation to surrender fugitive slaves—an engagement positively prohibited by the laws of God from Sinai ; and, 3, The exaction of a representation for slaves—for articles of merchandise—*under the name of persons.*' He goes on to say that 'the preservation, propagation, and perpetuity of slavery is the vital and animating principle of the national government, and that a knot of slaveholders give the law and prescribe the policy of the country.'"

You have seen how Mr. Douglass, when about to refer to my compendium of the pro-slavery clauses of the constitution, affected the utmost amazement at my flagrant dishonesty, and exclaimed, with well-acted horror at the turpitude of my offence against truth, "How can he screen himself from the charge of having perpetrated a deliberate and downright untruth ?"

Citizens of Glasgow ! there is not at this moment a man living in the United States who knows better than Mr. Douglass that, at the moment he was endeavouring by every form of speech to represent me as practicing a vile and wicked imposition upon the persons I addressed, I had given a brief but scrupulously accurate interpretation of every clause in the constitution to which I referred, with all the directness, solemnity, and emphasis which it is possible to give to words. I repeat—Mr. Douglass *knew* that the construction I had placed upon the constitution was not mine simply, but that of the entire United States—had been such from the time the constitution was framed—had never in a single instance been dissented from by the nation—and it had been so construed and carried out, literally, universally, and unchangeably, to the hour at which I spoke. What then shall I say of the charges he preferred against me ? what need I say ? It is enough for me that I vindicate my own veracity. It will not be the first time I have passed unscathed through an ordeal in Glasgow. And why, in every controversy, have I been victorious ? For this reason only, that I have never made an assertion upon a public platform which I was not prepared to verify by the most convincing documentary proof. In every conflict I have had, truth has been the victor, as it will be in the present one. The accusations Mr. Douglass has brought against me, in connection with my reading of the constitution, seem to

have sprung from the madness of desperation; for at the very instant he quoted my words, he had those of John Quincy Adams under his eye, and knew that that great Massachusetts statesman had more than sustained the literal truth of my reading; yet Mr. Douglass had the courage to proclaim, "I will make good what I say." I will now establish beyond the reach of future cavil, controversy, or doubt, the accuracy of my statements, and will convict Mr. Douglass out of his own mouth of having borne false witness on this question. I will not waste my time or yours by tracking Mr. Douglass through all the windings of his speech, or by attempting to dissipate his cobweb theories, his ingenious but baseless speculations, his abortive labours to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. No, I will call as my principal witness Frederick Douglass himself. I will confront Frederick Douglass in London with Frederick Douglass in Glasgow, and, until they have settled their own differences, be content to retain my own views of the provisions of the constitution; fortified in those views by their coincidence with the views of men of all shades of opinion in America, from John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, to William Lloyd Garrison of Massachusetts. Frederick Douglass, come into court. What were you former views of the American constitution?

[Mr. Thompson here read the extract from the speech of Mr. Douglass quoted in the first lecture, which will be found at page 10, and proceeded.]

Such were the views of Mr. Douglass when he arrived here in 1845, when he departed in 1847, and when he stood with me on the platform of St. Lawrence Hall, Toronto, Upper Canada, in 1851. They were my deliberate views before Mr. Douglass escaped from the house of bondage, and of the entire people of the United States for forty years before Mr. Douglass was born; as they are the views of his own countrymen still, east and west, north and south, in every part of America. With what justice, then, judge you, does he now charge me with those crimes against truth which are so plentifully interspersed throughout his recent address? Because he has seen cause, upon no warrant or authority that I can perceive, to change his views, am I a traitor to the anti-slavery cause and a pervertor of the truth for not following his example—for not giving the lie to everything I have learnt and promulgated for five and twenty years—for not stifling my own conscience, and forswearing my own convictions, that I may become his disciple? I have not so learnt my duty, and should I ever discover that I am now in error upon this matter of the constitution, I will be modest from the recollection of the fact. I will notice for a moment the general denial, offered by Mr. Douglass, of the pro-slavery character of the clauses which have been referred to:—

"I deny, utterly, that these provisions of the constitution were *intended* to *guarantee*, in any shape or form, *the right of property* in man in the United States."

What the intention of these provisions was will be abundantly manifested as we proceed; in the mean time, on the subject of guarantees, I may, in passing, quote the words of Daniel Webster,

which in the judgment of some persons will weigh as much as that of Mr. Douglass :—

"We have *slavery* already amongst us. The constitution found it amongst us ; it *recognized it*, and gave it *solemn guarantees*. To the full extent of these guarantees we are all bound, in honour, in justice, and by the constitution. All the *stipulations* contained in the constitution, *in favour of the slaveholding States* which are already in the union, ought to be fulfilled, and so far as depends on me, shall be fulfilled, in the fullness of their spirit and to the exactness of their letter."

Here we find the greatest constitutional lawyer of his time declaring that the constitution recognizes slavery, contains stipulations in favour of the slaveholding States, and gives to slavery solemn guarantees which in honour and in justice ought to be fulfilled. Again, President Buchanan, in his annual message to the Congress of the United States now sitting, says :—

"I cordially congratulate you upon the final settlement by the Supreme Court of the United States, of the question of slavery in the Territories, which had presented an aspect so truly formidable at the commencement of my administration. The right has been established, of every citizen to take his *property* of any kind, including *slaves*, into the common Territories belonging equally to all the States of the Confederacy, and to have it protected there, under the Federal constitution. Neither Congress, nor a Territorial legislature, nor any human power, has any authority to annul or impair *this vested right*. The supreme judicial tribunal of the country, which is a co-ordinate branch of the Government, has sanctioned and affirmed these principles of constitutional law, so manifestly just in themselves, and so well calculated to promote peace and harmony among the States. It is a striking proof of the sense of justice which is inherent in our people, that *the property in slaves* has never been disturbed, to my knowledge, in any of the Territories. Even throughout the late troubles in Kansas there has not been any attempt, as I am creditably informed, to interfere in a single instance with the right of the master. Had any such attempt been made, the judiciary would doubtless have afforded an adequate remedy. Should they fail to do this hereafter, it will then be time enough to strengthen their hands by further legislation. Had it been decided that either Congress or the Territorial legislature possesses the power to annul or impair *the right to property in slaves*, the evil would be intolerable. In the latter event, there would be a struggle for a majority of the members of the legislature at each successive election, and *the sacred rights of property* held under the Federal Constitution would depend, for the time being, on the result. The agitation would thus be rendered incessant whilst the territorial condition remained, and its baneful influence would keep alive a dangerous excitement among the people of the several States."

What is the view taken of the constitution by Theodore Parker, one of the ablest writers on the subject in the United States, and, withal, a voting abolitionist ?

"The South, left to herself, would never have consented to the programme of principles contained in the Declaration of Independence, although it was a noble-hearted Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, who drafted that document. But oppression for the time caused unity of action. When the representatives of the thirteen States came to organize a government on their new programme of *principles*, they made a programme of *purpose*, which was *stated in the preamble* to the constitution as follows :—'To form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity.' That was the programme of purpose ; but when they came to consider the measures for carrying out this programme, the party of conscience, North, and the party *in favor of slavery, South*, came into collision. * * * * Now see what America has done in favour of slavery. Here is the first step. In 1788

and 1789, *she inaugurated slavery into the constitution.* To do this she took three several steps; first, she left it to the several States as *a part of republican institutions;* secondly, she provided that the slaves who were accounted property at home should be counted persons in the constitution, and that five of them should count the same as three freemen. Accordingly, to-day 3,204,000 slaves have a representation in congress as large as the whole of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, with two millions of people. Thirdly, she *guaranteed that the slave* escaping from his master into a free State should not thereby become legally free, but *should be delivered up.* During the revolution there was no such law. This was the *compromise.* It is called *the comprise;* it is called *the great compromise of the constitution.* It was a compromise between the covetousness of the North, which wanted a special privilege of navigation, and the covetousness of the South, which wanted to be rich, yet not to earn. The North did *not* like slavery, but *did* love the dollar, and basely consented that the South should have slaves, and hold them as such, and that the Federal government should reach its great arm over the slave, and *protect the slave master's* right, on condition that the slave States should grant to the eastern States certain exclusive privileges."

I will quote finally on this point the following resolution, passed by the Reformed Presbyterians at a recent meeting of their synod in Philadelphia :—

"That slavery is a sin against God, of the blackest character, to be held in utmost abhorrence; that nothing but the absolute impossibility of emancipation can rid slaveholding of guilt; that the *constitution* of the United States is *one of the strongholds of slavery,* which, having gained a foothold in *its compromises,* has thereby elevated itself to its present place, as the paramount object of governmental protection and regard; that the only way to keep our skirts clear of this iniquity is to *withhold all active support from the constitution,* and to seek the formation of fundamental civil arrangements in accordance with God's word and the rights of man; that this sin lies at the door of such churches as admit slaveholders to their pulpits and communion tables; that no church is entirely free from it which does not forbid its members to give active support, by voting, holding office, or otherwise, to *a slaveholding constitution;* and that the ministry which refuses to exhibit the sin of slaveholding, to warn slaveholders, and testify against *constitutions* and laws favoring slavery, is recreant to its trust, and hostile to human rights and religious liberty."

Yet, Theodore Parker, Daniel Webster, President Buchanan, and John Quincy Adams to the contrary, Mr. Douglass asserts that "the constitution of the United States not only contains no guarantee in favour of slavery, but is in letter and spirit an anti-slavery instrument, demanding the abolition of slavery as a condition of its own existence as the supreme law of the land."

I am aware that the authorities I have already cited are of themselves sufficient to refute the positions taken by Mr. Douglass; but I must crave permission to notice them in detail. In reply to my assertions that Article 1, section 2 of the constitution gave the slave States a representation of three fifths of the slave population, there is an ingenious argument based upon the fallacy, that if the slaves were all made free, the political power of their masters would be increased by the two-fifths which would be added to the enumeration; overlooking the fact, that the free men would then exercise their political power in their own behalf, whereas it is now entirely in the hands of their tyrants, and is uniformly employed to strengthen, extend, and perpetuate slavery, and is a premium upon the propagation of the system. I will again quote from Mr. J. Q. Adams, who has placed this matter in the most convincing light :—

"*In outward show,* it is a representation of persons in bondage; *in fact, it is a representation of their masters*—the oppressor representing the oppressed. Is it in the compass of human imagination to devise a more perfect exemplification of the art of committing the lamb to the tender custody of the wolf? The representative is thus constituted, not the friend, agent, and trustee of the person whom he represents, but *the most inveterate of his foes.* * * * To call a government thus constituted a democracy, is to insult the understanding of mankind. * * * It is doubly tainted with the infection of riches and of slavery. There is no name in the language of national jurisprudence that can define it—no model in the records of ancient history, or in the political theories of Aristotle, with which it can be likened. Here is one class of men, consisting of not more than one-fortieth part of the whole people, not more than one-thirtieth part of the free population, exclusively devoted to their personal interests, identified with their own as slaveholders of the same associated wealth, and wielding by their votes, upon every question of government or of public policy, two-fifths of the whole power of the House. In the Senate of the Union the proportion of the slaveholding power is yet greater. * * * Its operation upon the government of the nation is, to establish an artificial majority in the slave representation over that of the free people in the American congress, and thereby to make the preservation, propagation, and perpetuation of slavery the vital and animating spirit of the national government."

Again, in 1833, the Hon. Mr. Clayton, a representative from Georgia, described this clause of the constitution as the *machinery* of the South, upon which Mr. Adams, in reply, observed that:—

"The machinery referred to had sent more than twenty men into congress, not elected by the machinery, who were slaves, but by those who owned it. If he were to go back to the history of the government from its foundation, it would be easy to prove that its decisions had in general been effected by majorities less than the number of the machine-made representatives; nay, he might go further, and insist that that very representation had been in fact the ruling power of the government. The history of the Union had afforded a continual proof, that the representation of this description of property, as well in the election of presidents and vice-presidents, as upon the floor of congress, had secured the slaveholding States the entire control of the national policy, and almost without exception the possession of the highest executive office of the Union. Always united in the purpose of regulating the affairs of the whole Union by the standard of the slaveholding interest, their disproportionate numbers in the electoral colleges had enabled them, in ten out of twelve quadrennial elections, to confer the chief magistracy upon one of their own citizens. Their suffrages at every election, without exception, had been almost exclusively confined to a candidate of their own caste."

Here I will leave the question of the true meaning of so much of the constitution as I affirmed related to giving a representation of three-fifths of the slaves to their masters, for the aggrandizement of their political power.

I have now to verify my former statement, that article 1, section 2, of the constitution provided for the continuance of the African slave trade for twenty years. It is said by Mr. Douglass that "the constitution does not warrant any such conclusion." Let us see. The exact words are:—

"The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States shall think proper to admit *shall not be prohibited by Congress* prior to the year 1808."

My reading of the constitution is that this clause deprived Congress of the power of abolishing the slave trade for twenty years, and that it left the Congress free either to abolish or permit it, at the expiration of that period. The question is, does this clause refer

to the slave trade? If it does, a child may at once perceive in what manner it deals with the subject. The clause amounts to a prohibition laid upon Congress against interfering with "migration or importation" for twenty years. Do these words refer to the slave trade? Mr. Douglass has for many years been intimately acquainted with a work written by an American judge, entitled, "A Sketch of the Laws relating to Slavery in the several States of the United States of America." I have on many occasions known Mr. Douglass to refer to this work as his authority, when speaking of the laws and constitution of his own country. It is not a book written to serve the cause of modern abolitionism, having been published between thirty and forty years ago. Judge Stroud says:—

"At the adoption of the constitution a majority of the States had but few slaves. In several, acts for the abolition of slavery had been passed. These States were politically interested to oppose the further *importation of slaves*. The ninth section of Article 1 was accordingly incorporated in the constitution. By the article of the constitution just quoted, congress was prevented from passing any law to prohibit, prior to the year 1808, *the importation of slaves* into the United States; yet no restraint was imposed upon its power to prevent her citizens from engaging in *the slave trade*, for the supply of foreign countries."

I will now cite, in vindication of the truthfulness and accuracy of my rendering of the constitution, an authority which may not be as well known to Mr. Douglass as that I have already produced, but which stands very high amongst the legal profession in America. It is the authority of Dr. Duer, late president of Columbia College, New York, in his "Lectures on Constitutional Jurisprudence." The "Outlines" of these lectures were dedicated to ex-President Madison, and the first edition of them, in their perfected form, to Chancellor Kent. The edition from which I quote is that of 1856, printed in Boston. President Duer, in his eighth lecture, when speaking on the power vested by the constitution in the federal government, for regulating intercourse with foreign nations, says:—

"The words of the constitution vesting this power [*the power of prohibiting the importation of slaves into the United States*, after a certain period had elapsed] are,—'The migration or importation of such persons as any of the States shall think proper to admit shall not be prohibited prior to 1808.' It is by no means difficult to account either for the existence of this restriction or for the terms in which it is expressed."

These words, from this standard text-book on the constitution, are enough for my personal vindication; but I may observe that Dr. Duer contends that the slave trade still continues—that "still the blot remains;" for though the toleration for a limited period, granted by the provision just cited, was confined to the States "then existing," Congress has refused to prohibit slavery in the Territories ceded by the elder States for the common benefit, by a similar restriction upon the new States created in them; has abstained from suppressing the domestic slave trade; has allowed the *migration* of slaves, though it has forbidden the *importation* from foreign parts; and has refused to listen to "the numerous petitions for abolishing slavery and the slave trade in the territories under its exclusive jurisdiction, and especially in the district of Columbia, the seat of the national government, the residence of the representatives of

foreign soverigns, and the resort of strangers and visitors from all quarters of the globe." I will only add, that the meaning I attached to the slave trade clause of the constitution, and the authorities I have now referred to, are supported by the unanimous and concurrent opinions both of the courts of law and of the people, throughout the whole of the United States.

Mr. Douglass has an easy method of disposing of what I said regarding the duty imposed by the constitution upon the President, to employ the military resources of the constitution to put down a domestic insurrection amongst the slaves. He first tells his hearers "there is no such clause in the constitution," and then says, "suppose we admit," &c. The audience are then permitted to know what Mr. Douglass would do if he were placed in the presidential chair. He says:—"I should choose my own way"—"If I could make out, as I believe I could,"—"I would have no hesitation"—"I would just write a proclamation, which would be based upon the old prophetic model of proclaiming liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof." This mode of dealing with the question is, I submit, unworthy of serious notice or reply, and I am in no mood to indulge in ridicule. Before Mr. Douglass is likely to be called upon to support this part of the constitution, as President of the United States, he will have ample time to reflect upon the trash he condescended to address to the ears of a Glasgow audience; time, too, for a little sober reflection upon the nature and obligations of the oath he will be required to take; and time, also, to learn the fact, that the President of the United States is elected not to interpret the constitution, but to obey it, and to administer it in all its parts, according to the hitherto unbroken practice of every department of the government, judicial, legislative, and executive. In the meanwhile, he cannot do better than consult the opinions he held, and so ably expressed, when he first visited this city.

In some respects, the most extraordinary part of the late address of Mr. Douglass is that in which he attempts to refute what I said in reference to the fugitive slave clause in the constitution. My words were, "Article 4, section 2, provides for the recovery from other states of fugitive slaves." Mr. Douglass says, "this clause is called the fugitive slave provision by those who wish to subserve the interests of slavery," intimating thereby his belief that when I call it so, I desire to promote slavery. I stated that this clause was inserted in the constitution in consequence of a motion made in the convention of 1787, by Messrs. Butler and Pinckney, of South Carolina, and that Mr. Madison afterwards told his constituents in Virginia that the clause would enable them to recover their fugitive slaves. This very simple statement of the origin, design, and preparation of article 4, section 2, of the constitution, by the truth of which I still abide, Mr. Douglass undertook to destroy, and prefaced his task by the following announcement:—

"I must ask you to look well to the statement. Upon its face it would seem to be a full and fair disclosure of the real transaction it professes to describe; and yet, *I declare unto you, knowing as I do the facts in the case, that I am*

*utterly amazed—utterly amazed at the down-right* UNTRUTH which that very simple plain statement really conveys to you, about that transaction. I dislike to use this very strong language, but you shall see that the case is quite as strong as the language employed. Under these fair-seeming words now quoted, I say there is *down-right untruth conveyed. The man who could make such a statement may have all the craftiness of a lawyer, but I think he will get but very little credit for the candour of a Christian.* What could more *completely destroy all confidence* than the making of such a statement as that? The case which he describes is entirely different from the real case as transacted at the time."

Mr. Douglass, nevertheless, admits that the motion I referred to was brought forward in the convention; he also admits that Mr. Madison did use the words I quoted, when addressing his constituents, but,—and here I must be permitted to make another somewhat lengthened quotation from the speech of Mr. Douglass, that I may do justice both to that gentleman and to myself:—

"The case which he [Mr. Thompson] describes is entirely different from the real case as transacted at the time."

Here are direct imputations of misrepresentation and falsehood.

"Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney *did* bring forward a proposition after the convention had framed the constitution, a proposition for the return of fugitive slaves to their masters, precisely as criminals are returned."

Here is an admission of the truth of, at least, one part of my statement.

"And what happened? Mr. Thompson tells you that after a debate it was withdrawn, and the proposition as it stands in the constitution was adopted. He does not tell you what was the nature of the debate. Not one word of it. No; *it would not have suited his purpose* to have done that. *I will tell you* what was the purport of that debate."

Permit me, in passing, to repel the insinuation conveyed in the above language, and at the same time to request that you will notice well the account Mr. Douglass gives of the proceedings of the convention:—

"After debate and discussion, the provision as it stands was adopted. The purpost of the provision as brought forward by Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney was this: 'No person called to servitude in any State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service and labour, but shall be delivered up on claim, and passed to whom such service or labour may be due.' Very well, what happened?"

Now attentively mark the account which Mr. Douglass gives of what happened:—

"*The proposition was met by a storm of opposition* in the convention; *members rose up in all directions*, saying that they had no more business to catch slaves for their masters than they had to catch horses for their owners—*that they would not undertake any such thing*; and the convention instructed a committee to alter that provision and the word '*servitude*,' *so that it might apply* NOT *to slaves*, but to freemen—to persons bound to serve and labour, *and not to slaves*. And thus far it seems that Mr. Madison, who was quoted so triumphantly, tells us in these very Madison Papers that that word was struck out from the constitution, *because* it applied to *slaves* and not to freemen, and that the convention refused to have that word in the constitution, simply because they did not wish, and *would not have the idea that there could be property in men in that instrument.* These are Madison's own words, so that he can be quoted on both sides. But it may be asked, if the clause does not apply to slaves, to whom does it apply? It says, 'No person serving and labouring, escaping to another State, shall be

discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up to whom such service or labour may be due.' To whom does it apply if not to slaves? I answer that *it applied at the time of its adoption to a very numerous class of persons in America; and I have the authority of no less a personage* than Daniel Webster, that it was intended to apply to that class of men—a class of persons known in America as 'redemptioners.' There was quite a number of them at that day, who had been taken to America precisely as coolies have been taken to the West Indies. They entered into a contract to serve and labour so long for so much money, and the children born to them in that condition were also held as bound to 'service and labour.' It also applies to *indentured apprentices*, and to *persons* taking upon themselves an obligation to 'serve and labour.'"

Here you have the account given by Mr. Douglass of the passing of the fugitive slave clause of the constitution. This paragraph in his speech contains his justification and proof of the foul and calumnious charges of falsehood and fabrication brought against me in its introduction. You shall now have *all* that the Madison Papers contain respecting the proceedings in the convention upon this clause. They are the only authority to which either Mr. Douglass or I can refer. You will be the judges whether they support the statement I made in my former lecture, or whether they support the circumstantial description given by Mr. Douglass. Here are the literal extracts from the Madison Papers:—

*Tuesday, August* 28*th*, 1787.

Mr. Butler and Mr. Pinckney moved to require fugitive slaves and servants to be delivered up like criminals.

Mr. Wilson.—This would oblige the executive of the State to do it at the public expense.

Mr. Sherman saw no more propriety in the public seizing and surrendering a slave or servant than a horse.

Mr. Butler withdrew his proposition, in order that some particular provision might be made, apart from this article.

Article 15, as amended, was then agreed to, *nem. con.*—*Madison Papers*, pp. 1447—8.

*Wednesday, August* 29, 1787.

Mr. Butler moved to insert after Article 15, "If any person bound to service or labor in any of the United States shall escape into another State, he or she shall not be discharged from such service or labor in consequence of any regulations subsisting in the State to which they escape, but shall be delivered up to the person justly claiming their service or labor,"—which was agreed to, *nem. con.*—p. 1456.

*Saturday, September* 15, 1787.

Article 4, Section 2, (the third paragraph,) the term "legally" was struck out; and the words, "under the laws thereof," inserted after the word "State," in compliance with the wish of some who thought the term *legal* equivocal, and favoring the idea that SLAVERY was legal in a moral view.—p. 1589.

Here you have Mr. Madison's own history of the origin and constitutional foundation of the Fugitive Slave Law. Its germ is in the motion of the delegates from South Carolina; its development is in the clause brought up by Mr. Butler on the 29th of August; and the last alteration made in it was on the 15th of September, when it was adopted in the shape in which it at present appears in the constitution. Here you have all that is known respecting this particular clause. There is nothing here about the proposition being met by "*a storm of opposition*;" nothing about "*members rising up in all directions*; nothing about "*a committee to alter the provision that it might apply NOT to* SLAVES *but to* FREEMEN—to "per-

sons bound to service and labour," and not to slaves; nothing about Mr. Madison "telling us that that word was struck out from the constitution because it applied to *slaves* and not to free men; and, as for Mr. Madison's own words, they are simply that the word "legally" was struck out, and the words "under the laws thereof" inserted, in compliance with the wish of some who thought the word *legal* equivocal, and favouring the idea that slavery (which was the thing to which the whole clause related) was legal in a moral view." And then we have Mr. Madison himself telling his constituents, that this clause was expressly inserted to enable them to reclaim their slaves; Patrick Henry telling his constituents the same; Governor Randolph saying the same; General Pinckney the same, and Mr. Iredell, in North Carolina, the same—adding, that "though the word slave be not mentioned, this is the meaning of it. The Northern delegates, owing to their particular scruples on the subject of slavery, did not choose the word slavery to be mentioned." And now I confidently ask this audience to decide whether the version I gave of this transaction on the last occasion justifies the language I have quoted from the speech in reply—language which I am sure it is unnecessary to characterise. Most deeply do I regret that, in the vindication of my own veracity as a public man, I should have had occasion to enter on so painful an exposure of the conduct of one whose character, welfare and usefulness were once so important to the cause of his brethren in bonds.

And now, having met the charge of gross untruth brought against me, I shall pass over the construction put upon the fugitive slave clause by the gentleman who differs from me, and what *he* would do if he were a judge called upon to administer the law, and will briefly state the case as it stands upon the highest authority.

Do me the simple justice (I cannot doubt you will) to bear in your minds the charges which have been brought against me of untruth, suppression, falsification, misrepresentation—the craftiness of the lawyer—subserving the interests of slavery, &c.—charges which, could they be substantiated, would render me for ever infamous, and justify you in thrusting me from this hall as the deliberate perpetrator of treason against truth.

I open the work of Stroud on the Laws of the United States relating to Slavery, and turning to the chapter headed, "THE ACT OF CONGRESS RELATIVE TO FUGITIVE SLAVES," I read:—

"The federal government being composed of thirteen distinct and independent sovereignties, in four of which, before the constitution of the United States was framed, slavery had been abolished, it was deemed expedient to *secure by stipulation,* to be inserted *in the constitution,* A RIGHT in the citizens of one state, whose servants or *slaves* should escape from their masters, and become residents of another State, to reclaim such fugitives and subject them again to bondage. This stipulation is comprised in the third division of section 2, article 4, in these words, 'No person held to service or labour in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour shall be due."

What were the words I used in this hall a month ago, when I referred to this clause? "Section 2, article 4, provides for the recovery from other States of fugitive slaves." Was this a base,

mean, grossly untrue representation of the clause? The passage I have read from Stroud answers that question, and demonstrates that no words in the English language could more accurately describe the intention of the constitution in this particular.

Is further confirmation required? Here it is. Because of this provision of the constitution, and upon the authority of this provision, and to give effect to this provision, the Congress of the United States, in 1793, passed an act for its actual enforcement, which Stroud tells us "was the source of bitter anguish to its victims, and excited the most painful sympathy." Now, if this clause in the constitution had been what it was described to be in the Queen's Rooms—if it related to redemptioners, or apprentices, or persons held to labour under ordinary compacts, is it likely that within five years after the adoption of the constitution, when the spirit of liberty was fresh and strong—the constitution so young that every citizen of the States knew its history—when those men were all living that were said to have resisted such a provision in the Convention—that such a law as the one I have referred to, so cruel, so afflicting, and which caused so much painful sympathy, could have been passed, or, if passed, enforced? Let me sum up all, in the most impressive language of an American statesman whose words I have more than once before cited,—I mean that great good man, John Quincy Adams, who, being dead, yet speaketh thus :—

"The freemen of the North (at the time when the constitution was adopted), reduced to the alternative of departing from the vital principle of liberty, or of forfeiting the Union itself, averted their faces, and with trembling hand subscribed the bond. The articles of the confederation contained no guarantee for the property of the slaveholder—no double representation of him in the Federal Councils—no stipulation for the recovery of fugitive slaves. But when the powers of government came to be delegated to the Union, the South refused their subscription to the parchment, till it should be saturated with the infection of slavery, and the deadly venom of slavery was infused into the constitution of freedom. The bargain between freedom and slavery, contained in the constitution of the United States, is cruel and oppressive, by rivetting the chains of slavery—by pledging the faith of freedom to maintain and perpetuate the tyranny of the master, and grossly unequal and impolitic by admitting that slaves are at once,—1st. ENEMIES, to be kept in subjection; 2nd. PROPERTY, to be secured and returned to their owners; and 3rd. PERSONS, not to be represented themselves, but for whom their masters are privileged with nearly a double share of representation."

Such is the constitution of the United States. Upon this constitution the Union has been based. Under this constitution the government is administered. A high court of justiciary sits constantly to declare it, and has the power of annulling any act of congress inconsistent with its provisions. It guarantees, protects, and perpetuates the slavery of the United States.

I am charged by Mr. Douglass with untruthfulness for saying that, under the constitution, the slave States had increased from five to fifteen, whereas they had increased only from twelve to fifteen; while the free States had increased from one to eighteen. This is a most disingenuous representation of the case. When I spoke of the five slave States which existed when the constitution was first adopted, I had before me a list of the original States, and will confess that I overlooked the small State of Delaware, and took

account only of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. It did not occur to me to include any of the other States among the *Slave States* of the Union. Pennsylvania, on the 1st of March, 1780, had passed a law for the abolition of slavery, which, after a preamble full of the most noble and humane sentiments, enacted :—

"That all persons, as well negroes and mulattoes as others, who shall be born within this State from and after the passing of this act, shall not be deemed and considered as servants for life, or slaves ; and that all servitude for life, or slavery of children in consequence of the slavery of their mothers, in the case of all children born within this State from and after the passing of this act as aforesaid, shall be and hereby is *utterly taken away, extinguished, and for ever abolished.*"

Pennsylvania, therefore, could not be called a slave State, neither could Massachusetts, in which slavery was abolished only one day later than in Pennsylvania; neither could Rhode Island or Connecticut, in both of which slavery was abolished in 1784; while New Hampshire followed in 1792, New York in 1799, and New Jersey in 1804. The five States to which I referred were eminently, technically, and economically, as well as geographically, *the* slave States of the Union, and this Mr. Douglass well knew; as, also, that the term *slave* States has never at any period been applied to any States situated to the north of Maryland and Virginia. He well knew, besides, that at the period when the constitution came into operation, the doom of slavery was virtually decreed in the States which I excepted from the category of slave States. I was, I contend, substantially correct; for the omission of which I was guilty by inadvertence, was that of a small State of twenty-three miles in breadth, which contained even in 1830 only 76,000 inhabitants, including 3,000 slaves. But let me justify what I said respecting the increase of the slave States under that constitution which Mr. Douglass says neither guarantees nor recognizes slavery. Under this constitution two new slave States—those of Mississippi and Alabama—were formed out of the territory of Georgia; another, the State of Kentucky, was made out of the territory of Virginia; another, Tennessee, was formed by a division of North Carolina; then we have the purchase of Louisiana from France in 1803; then the purchase of Florida from Spain in 1819; then the admission of the State of Missouri in 1821 ; then the admission of the State of Arkansas in 1836 ; and, finally, by fraud and force, the annexation of Texas, wrested from Mexico, and its admission into the union in 1845. Here are nine slave States, added to those (properly so called) which existed when the Union was formed. All of them have been constitutionally admitted except Missouri, when a compromise was entered into, with the consent of the majority of the people. The addition of these States has extended the area of slave territory from 200,000 square miles in 1788, to nearly a million at the present time; while the number of slaves has increased from 600,000 in 1790, to more than 4,000,000 in 1859 ; and the market value of the slaves in the United States has augmented from 200,000,000 dollars in 1790, to 2,500,000,000 in 1860. This increase of slave States and slaves has given the slave

power an addition of 18 members in the senate, and 30 members in the House of Representatives, and has enabled the slaveholding oligarchy to monopolize the highest places in the government, and to dictate both the domestic and foreign policy of the country. The present Republican party, should it succeed in its present struggle with the pro-slavery party to which it is opposed, may check the extension of slave territory, and may redeem the government from the stigma of being avowedly on the side of slavery; but can never take one constitutional step towards the abolition of slavery in any territory that has been admitted, as a State, within the pale of the Union. Slave property is as much under the protection of the constitution as property of any other description.

Mr. Douglass says that to dissolve the Union would be to do just what the slaveholders would like to have done. On this subject the testimony of slaveholders themselves will be regarded as the best that can be given; and I will therefore bring before you three passages, out of many that might be selected, and leave you to draw your own conclusions on which side the weight of authority lies, and who are doing most to advance the overthrow of slavery,—those who support the constitution which is the bulwark of slavery, and who would draw the cords of the Union closer; or those who would withdraw from the constitution, would annul it as a compact in oppression, and would dissolve the Union between the slaveholding States.

The editor of the *Marysville* (Tennessee) *Intelligencer*, in an article on the character and condition of the slave population, says:

"We of the South are emphatically surrounded by a dangerous class of beings—degraded, stupid savages; who, if they could but entertain the idea that immediate and unconditional death would not be their portion, would re-enact the St. Domingo tragedy. But the consciousness, with all their stupidity, that a tenfold force, superior in discipline if not in barbarity, would gather from the four corners of the United States, *and slaughter them*, keeps them in subjection. But to the *non-slaveholding States particularly* we are indebted for a permanent safe-guard against insurrection. Without their assistance, the white population of the South would be too weak to quiet that innate desire of liberty which is ever ready to act itself out with every rational creature."

In the debate in Congress on the resolution to censure John Quincy Adams for presenting a petition for the dissolution of the union, Mr. Underwood of Kentucky said:—

"They (the South) were the weaker portion, were in the minority. The North could do what they pleased with them; they could adopt their own measures. One thing he knew well, that the State which he in part represented had perhaps a deeper interest in this subject than any other, except Maryland and a small part of Virginia. And why? Because he knew that to dissolve the Union, and separate the different States composing this confederacy, making the Ohio river and Mason and Dixon's line the boundary line; he knew as soon as that was done, slavery was done in Kentucky, Maryland, and a large portion of Virginia, and it would extend to all the States south of this line. The dissolution of the Union was the dissolution of slavery. It had been the common practice for southern men to get up on this floor, and say, 'Touch this subject, and we will dissolve this Union as a remedy.' Their remedy was the destruction of the thing they wished to save, and any sensible man could see it. If the Union were dissolved into two parts, the slave would cross the line, and turn round and curse his master from the other shore."

This declaration of Mr. Underwood, as to the dependence of the

slave masters on the citizens of the free States, to guard their plantations and secure them against desertion, is substantially confirmed by Thomas D. Arnold of Tennessee, who, in a speech on the same subject, assures us that the people of the south were dependent on the north for personal protection against their slaves. In assigning his reasons for adhering to the Union, Mr. Arnold made use of the following language :—

"The free States had a majority of 44 in that house. Under the new census they would have 53. The cause of the slaveholding States was getting weaker and weaker, and what were they to do? He would ask his southern friends, what the South had to rely on if the Union were dissolved? Suppose the dissolution could be peaceably effected (if it did not involve a contradiction in terms), what had the South to depend upon? All the crowned heads were against her. A million of slaves were ready to rise and strike for freedom at the first tap of the drum. If they were cut loose from their friends at the North (friends that ought to be, and without them the South had no friends), whither were they to look for protection? How were they to sustain an assault from England or France with that cancer at their vitals? The more the South reflected, the more clearly must she see that she has a deep and vital interest in maintaining the Union."

These unimpeachable testimonies may be accepted, I think, as a sufficient answer to the unsupported assertion of Mr. Douglass, that the dissolution of the Union would be just what the slaveholders would like.

Since I arrived in this city I have seen, for the first time, a circular issued by the Glasgow New Association for the Abolition of Slavery, in which I find the following paragraph :—

"Matters stood thus without any schism [between Mr. Douglass and the American Anti-Slavery Society] till May, 1851, when, at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass came out openly and nobly, avowing his change of views, and stating that his paper should not be admitted to their society under false colours. This avowal brought forth a burst of indignation, and seemed to originate feelings of animosity, that have ever since been directed against Douglass, with the apparent view of crushing his influence and his paper."

This statement is untrue, and I will lay the facts before the New Association in a form which will admit of no question. I was myself present at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in the city of Syracuse, in May, 1851, and can testify that the avowal of Mr. Douglass called forth neither "a burst of indignation," nor any "indignation" at all. On the morning of the third day of the meeting a resolution was introduced by Mr. Edmund Quincy, recommending certain anti-slavery papers (including Mr. Douglass's paper, the *North Star*), to the support of the members of the American Anti-Slavery Society. The Rev. S. J. May moved to include the Liberty Party paper, published at Syracuse. The proposal was objected to on the ground that its views respecting the constitution were diametrically opposite to those of the majority of the society, and to the resolution of 1844, which had never been rescinded. In the course of the debate which arose, Mr. Douglass deemed it necessary, as the proprietor and editor of one of the papers which had been recommended upon the presumption that its principles were in harmony with those of the American Anti-Slavery

Society, to rise and define his position. I will quote his own account, as given in his paper immediately afterwards. He said :—

"We felt it in duty bound to announce at once to our old anti-slavery companions, that we no longer possessed the requisite qualification for their official approval and commendation ; and to assure them that we had arrived at the firm convictlon that the constitution, construed in the light of well-established rules of legal interpretation, might be made consistent in its details with the noble purpose avowed in its preamble ; and that hereafter we should insist upon the application of such rules to that instrument, and demand that it be wielded in behalf of emancipation.

"Hereafter, then, when it shall be affirmed by slaveholders at the South and by their guilty minions at the North, that the right to hold men and women as property is recognized, guaranteed, and established by the constitution of the United States, we shall interpose our stern denial, and demand the proof from the record itself. We therefore give notice to our readers, that while it is not our purpose to be a partizan, nor to array ourselves against our friends of the American Anti-Slavery Society in their work of regenerating public sentiment, that while we mean still to co-operate with them in the essential work in which they are engaged, we shall nevertheless take the liberty [which none but mean-spirited and despotic persons will be disposed to deny us] of differing with them as to the proper interpretation to be given to the constitution of the United States."—*North Star, May 15th and 22nd,* 1851.

It will be seen that there is nothing about "a burst of indignation" in the account given by Mr. Douglass himself, of the proceedings at the Annual Meeting in 1851. Again, two years afterwards, Mr. Douglass attended and spoke at the Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, held in the city of New York, May 11th, 1853. In the course of his remarks he said :—

"He experienced great pleasure indeed in appearing, and regarded the great occasion as a proof of the incoming of that day when there should be no slave and no clanking chains."

Again : in the evening of the same day Mr Douglass attended the Annual Meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and concluded a very long and able speech by saying :—

"Sir, I have fully spoken out the thoughts of my heart. I have spoken as a coloured man, and not as the representative of any anti-slavery society. There are many societies, but there is but one cause. That cause I desire to serve with my whole heart. I have now spoken at the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and at the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The oppressed, among whom I am numbered, should be grateful to both. I honour and respect Lewis Tappan, I love and revere William Lloyd Garrison, and may God have mercy on me when I refuse to strike a blow against slavery in connection with either of these gentlemen. I will work with either, and if one discards me because I work with the other, the responsibility is not mine."

Again : on the return of Mr. Douglass to his editorial chair in Rochester, he gave his readers some account of the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, saying :—

"Those who attended that meeting with a view to discover infidelity in its proceedings, were doomed to disappointment. There was a remarkably religious turn given to the meeting from beginning to end."

After remarking upon the absence of Messrs. Foster, Pillsbury, and Wright, he says :—

"These champions of freedom—men who have stamped their character on the anti-slavery movement, so that he who runs may read—should one or all of them have been on hand. Their absence cannot but excite remark. They are the spice of such occasions. Injudicious to be sure, for they have the faculty of say-

ing just what they think, without regard to time or place. They should have accompanied the ark on its restoration to its place in New York."

Mr. Douglass, after insinuating that these gentlemen had been kept away by the managers of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with a view of silencing the cry of infidelity, and condemning "both the principle and policy of such a course as false and mistaken," proceeds thus :—

"The anti-slavery platform is broad enough for the world to stand upon, and we have an interest in maintaining its breadth. There is a principle of vital importance to the slave, and to every other victim of injustice involved in the matter. To make the anti-slavery platform, even for expediency's sake, too narrow for such men as Wright, Foster, and Pillsbury, is not to be endured in silence. We don't say it has been done ; but we do say that, considering the circumstances, there is reason for the conjecture. Wright, Foster, and Pillsbury are charged with being infidels ; and we are not called upon either to affirm or to deny it ; but, granting that the charge is well founded, the man who would say to them on the anti-slavery platform, 'I am holier than thou,' has either yet to learn the first claims of humanity and the philosophy of reform, or is at least a tyrant. The genuine abolitionist has little time to spend in examining the creeds of his companions. Filled with a sense of the tremendous wrongs of the bondsman—the wickedness of slavery—he rushes forward with heaven-lit inspiration, calling upon all who wear the image of God to help in abolishing the wickedness, and in giving liberty to the captive. In doing this, he neither endorses or passes judgment upon any man's creed."

Such was the rebuke which, in 1853, Mr. Douglass thought fit to administer to the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, based upon an utterly unfounded assumption that Messrs. Foster, Wright, and Pillsbury had, for prudential reasons, been kept in the back ground.

As for the bitterness, animosity, and persecution of which Mr. Douglass speaks, as having been awakened against him on account of his alleged change of opinion, the charge is without a shadow of support, either as respects the American Anti-Slavery Society, or the friends of that body in this country. Least of all can such a charge be justly brought against me, who so late as the 18th of February last received a note from Mr. Douglass saying,—"From my heart I thank you for your noble words in speaking of me to the people of Newastle-upon-Tyne." It was in the same spirit that, in the cause of truth, I addressed a meeting here a month ago, and took the liberty of placing my views before the public of this city, as Mr. Douglass had done before me. Mr. Douglass, with ample time to reply, although he has not been able to extract from what I said a sentence or a syllable which he could construe into unfairness or disrespect, has hurled against me the most reckless, and as I trust I have demonstrated, most undeserved and false charges of having deliberately and knowingly violated the truth. I have met those charges, not in the spirit in which they were preferred, but with temper and courtesy—and I am content to leave the result with you, satisfied that your judgment will be impartial and just.

---

Printed by Richard D. Webb, Great Brunswick-street, Dublin.